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ABSTRACT

This study was intended to assess the response of educational administrators to crises by measuring the degree that school superintendents vary their responses according to the characteristics of a crisis. A questionnaire was developed, pilot-tested, and revised, then sent to all 39 school superintendents in Rhode Island. The resulting data were analyzed and Pearson product-moment correlations were calculated for each set of responses. The analysis was intended to test the major hypothesis that there are significant relationships between the characteristics of a crisis and administrators' responses. Seven subhypotheses were investigated to test the validity of the major hypothesis. Since six of the seven subhypotheses were supported by the data at the .05 level or better, the author concludes that the major hypothesis was supported by the investigation. (JG)

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ADMINISTRATOR BEHAVIOR IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

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DEDICATION

To my wife and daughter,
Valerie and Vanessa, for all those
times when they made sacrifices to
make this research a reality.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In paralleling the growth and complexity of organizations in society, there has been an expansion of the duties and responsibilities of administrators in these organizations. The chief administrator is sometimes responsible for decisions that ultimately might mean his own and/or the organization's success or failure. These periods of critical decision-making are situations that involve crisis. These crisis situations have become a major concern of administrators and involve scientific management approaches. Therefore, the tasks in crisis management require very special professional as well as personal characteristics of administrators. These professional and personal characteristics determine the behavior of the administrator in the crisis as well as the outcome of the crisis.

This is especially true of educational administrators who are faced with crisis. They have a particularly important function because it is through their leadership that youth will become more socialized and educated. Educational administrators must have skills founded in scientific as well as behavioral management. Although there are a variety of educational administrators to meet the needs of students at

all levels, the superintendent of schools is the prime educational leader in the school system. He is the prime manager to whom most all other individuals are ultimately responsible.

The present study relates to crisis situations and the superintendent's response to such situations. Crisis management has become a daily task for the superintendent of schools and involves a variety of areas that concern administering programs within the school system. A crisis is usually an occurrence that seems to come about unexpectedly and causes the superintendent to devote a great deal of time toward its solution. Very often, crisis involves opposition to the superintendent's plan or standards. Many superintendents are placed in the position of crisis without being prepared for it, and some try to ignore a crisis, which is almost impossible.

The history of crisis administration can be traced to the growth of business, the principle of competition and the free enterprise system. In education, the history of crisis began when social issues became the concern of college and university students. These influences of society gradually extended to the secondary and elementary schools. Students and faculty were aware and influenced by such things as the Vietnam War, racism, drugs, and women's rights. Pressure groups came to the surface demanding that education and educators change and participate in the solution of these social problems. For example, the students at the university level sought a relevant university sensitive to their problems.

This was exhibited by the organization of such groups as the Students for a Democratic Society (S.D.S.).

The momentum, then, for a society in crisis was evident and education as a part of that society could not avoid such crisis nor could educational administrators. The pattern of occupying buildings had been established in several schools beginning with the Berkeley Free Speech Movement at the University of California at Berkeley in 1964. After Berkeley one of the most well-known rebellions was at Columbia in the spring of 1968 when students occupied five university buildings for a week and caused the university to suspend normal operations for the remainder of the semester. The characteristics that the rebellions since Columbia have had in common are: occupation of buildings, the involvement of community people, fighting police, and reluctance to negotiate.

The crisis that began as a reaction to societal problems were thought to be an interruption of the educational process. Some administrators felt that the schools were being used by special interest groups to achieve their goals. However, it was the students and faculties themselves who were developing special interests; and "the disruption" was really a "reaction" to society's representative, the school administration.

In response to these changes, the school administrator at all levels had to change. He now assumed the position of a "change agent" and "facilitator." His position called for

the usual amount of paperwork, but it now involved developing programs that involved vital issues concerning human beings who had to meet the problems of society. It also meant that the administrator had to develop new methods to handle crises that might occur. Also, these new methods provided for crises which were concerned with a variety of the aspects of the administrative position which he held.

In summary, education has faced crisis much like other social institutions. It was brought into schools by people. The emphasis placed on crisis was more evident when student disruptions occurred, but other forms of crisis were soon to occur in school administration. The school administrator is now aware of crisis in the many facets of his position. Although these crises are often very different, they do have some common aspects which can be considered. It is important to view the administrator in the light of the new crises which he must face.

Statement of the Problem

The problem to which this study was directed is viewed from two perspectives or levels, one general and one specific. The general problem itself is multi-faceted, and several of these facets are related to the present research. This section outlines the general problems which this study addressed, and focuses on the specific problem of observing superintendent response to these crises.

While the present study did not attempt to develop a plan to solve educational crises, it used four descriptions of crises to form a basis for analyzing crisis behavior. The question of whether crisis could be planned for or whether various prescriptions can be made to solve crises in education is beyond the scope of this study. As the term was defined, however, crisis management relates to some method or solutions to critical educational problems.

A more specific problem for the study was the need to establish realistic crisis situations in order to analyze superintendent behavior. This was necessary in order to provide a context for the research and to study possible links with related research in non-educational settings. Also, the review of the literature provided the necessary connections to crisis behavior and management in education.

The specific problem to which this study was directed was the empirical determination of the relationships between characteristics of crisis and school administrators' reaction. The work of Rodriguez on crisis management indicated that some relationships exist between characteristics of crisis and school administrators' reaction.[1]

The general problem of characteristics of crisis and factors determining administrator response in crisis situations

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[1]John H. Rodriguez, "Superintendent Behavior in Crisis Situations" (Ph. D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1973), pp. 72-78.

were investigated in this study. The descriptions of crisis were prepared to place emphasis upon certain characteristics of crisis and to provide for measurement of superintendent response.

Purpose of the Study

The basic objective of this study was to establish relationships about school administrators' behavior in crisis management as it relates to the various characteristics emphasized in four crisis situations. This objective also includes drawing some implications about the relationships that are established concerning the behavior of school superintendents. The objective is to generate some specific principles to describe crisis management in educational administration. At this time, few such principles exist to guide the educational administrator, nor are there many available in the management of crises by the superintendent of schools. Also, it is intended that the principles generated here will serve to guide future research in more experimental studies to be done in the future.

A corollary objective is to add to the existing meager research and literature pertaining to crisis situations in education. Although there has been much written about many types of crises involving many other fields of study, there has been very little written which directly pertains to education. The literature on crisis includes much about how it is defined in relation to a particular

historical event or in other contexts of administration. There is very little written about crisis in education. Most of the literature in education on crisis concerns student disruptions or general problem-solving techniques which are not pertinent to the present study. There is also little attempt in the literature to define crisis for school superintendents or to view and describe the characteristics of crises.

Hypotheses

The present research was directed to the major hypothesis that there are significant relationships between the characteristics of crises and administrative response to those crises. Also, the following specific sub-hypotheses were established, based on a review of previous research relating to crisis management:

(1) There are statistically significant relationships between the amount of time perceived available by superintendents to solve crisis and the degree to which they would contract authority.

(2) There are statistically significant relationships between the amount of stress perceived by superintendents and the degree to which they use other resources.

(3) There are statistically significant relationships between the amount of uncertainty perceived by superintendents and the degree to which stress is present.

(4) There are no statistically significant relationships between the amount of time perceived by superintendents and the degree that they communicate.

(5) There are statistically significant relationships between the amount of stress perceived by superintendents and the degree that they contract authority.

(6) There are statistically significant relationships between the amount of uncertainty perceived by superintendents and the degree to which they contract authority.

(7) There are statistically significant relationships between the amount of seriousness perceived by superintendents and the degree of stress they experienced.

The above sub-hypotheses were tested by using appropriate correlational analyses at the .05 significance level.

Perspective for the Study

Because crisis in education pertains to a variety of individuals and situations, it was necessary: (1) to select a framework which specified the type of crisis to be considered, (2) to determine common characteristics of crisis, (3) to relate educational crisis to those found in other fields, and (4) to consider the implications of the findings for the locality in which the study was conducted as well as to relate these implications to other settings.

The present study concerns educational administration. This includes all levels of school administration from grammar school to the graduate level. This study may be related to all levels, but its primary concern is with the administration of elementary and secondary schools during periods or situations involving crisis. The literature selected and research undertaken was approached with this as the major concern. Also, crisis management was considered from the viewpoint of the educator who faces crisis in real situations as part of his job. More specifically, it is the administrator's view of crisis and his behavior in such situations that is of prime importance to this study. The literature and research is viewed to complement the responses given by administrators and to the crisis situations presented.

The focus on the administrator in education had to be narrowed. There are many administrators in the field of

education. These administrators have a variety of experiences and training, and many have to deal with crises in varying degrees. At the elementary and secondary level, the administrator who is at the top of the administrative hierarchy is the school superintendent. He is faced with serious crises more frequently than other administrators. Therefore, the superintendent of schools was chosen as the administrative type for the study.

The perspective for this study included an analysis of the crises that superintendents have to face. A classification into areas of crisis such as curriculum crisis, personnel crisis, and student-related crisis was needed in order to observe superintendent behavior when these crises situations occurred. The study considered the behavior of superintendents in describing crisis management, but it was outside the scope of the present research to establish prescriptions for administrators to follow in crisis situations.

Crisis management was viewed from the perspective that it is one of the duties and responsibilities of the superintendent. Crisis was viewed as something which cannot be avoided by the superintendent and a facet of his position that has become part of his duties. Also, in relation to crisis, the corollary that superintendents must possess personal traits which allow them to maintain their composure during crisis situations was evident as part of this perspective.

Crisis was divided into areas involving such topics as curriculum, student disruption, personnel, and school-committee relations. Descriptions of crises were constructed with the intention of emphasizing their characteristics. These characteristics were written from the perspective of placing the superintendent in a position in which he would have to respond to the crisis based upon the circumstances given. The intentional emphasis on certain aspects of the crisis in each of the crisis situations provided responses and behavior measurements of superintendents in Rhode Island related to specific characteristics of the crisis or its context.

Definitions

Administrators. This term refers to all those in any field who hold positions of leadership and/or authority. More specifically in this study, it relates to the educational administrator who is responsible at various levels of education for students. Usually, these administrators in the field of education have had some training and very definitely have developed some expertise in the field. Most states have certification requirements to maintain high standards in education, and school administrators are not excluded from these requirements.

Administrator Response. This refers to actions on the part of the administrator which involve the decision-making process. These actions often result in consequences that are

the result of positive or negative decisions. It is these responses that reveal the administrator as a change agent as well as a stabilizer. In this research, an administrator's response was measured in relation to various characteristics of crisis. The responses that were measured are contracting authority, fragmenting of communication, resources used, and power employed to influence those involved in the specific crisis. The research measured the relationship between these reactions and a specified set of characteristics of crisis.

Crisis. This refers to problems which are not planned and cause the administrator to set aside what he was working on before the problem occurred. These administrative problems are often positive in that they cause the administrator to change the organization's standards to meet immediate goals, often forgetting long-range goals. "It is a series of events which energizes the organization, causes a response to a demand, and invokes the decision process."[1] Crisis has characteristics that are common to all such situations. Some of these characteristics include time limitations, stress, demand for a decision, uncertainty in relation to the outcome, degree of community involvement, and modification of organizational standards.

Superintendent of Schools. This term refers to superintendents in Rhode Island. There are a total of thirty-nine superintendents. Each superintendent is the educational

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[1] Ibid., p. 15.

administrator responsible for the school system in their city or town. They are all certified by the state of Rhode Island which requires a master's degree or thirty-six (36) semester hours of approved study beyond the bachelor's degree from an institution approved by the Rhode Island State Board of Regents. Also, all have had five years successful teaching experience, two of which were as principal, supervisor, director, or other positions of similar rank and responsibility. The position of superintendent often requires individuals with business skills along with experience in personnel management, instructional management, and community relations.

Organization Standards. This term relates to superintendents' responses to crises and concerns superintendent action which results in the modification of the structure of the school system and/or the procedures employed. The consequences of change in organization standards is important when considering the influence of decisions made by the superintendent in crisis.

Crisis Decisions. This concerns decision making in crisis management. These decisions are ones which are more difficult because of time limitations, stress, community pressures, and other crisis-related pressures that are common to these situations in education.

Limitations of the Study

The topic of crisis management in education involves a few components with which the present study could and did not deal. First, this study did not attempt to consider other influences on crisis management such as: (1) the personal characteristics and background of the superintendent, (2) the effect of the media, or (3) funding limitations. These other aspects of crisis in education are areas that future research might explore. That the above influences have an important role in crisis, and particularly in the outcome of crisis situations, appears to be a reasonable hypothesis.

Second, the present study did not approach the area of superintendent training. Although superintendents are trained in a variety of ways, most have taken courses in educational administration and have had some prior experience in school administration. Some may have had the opportunity of being an intern with a superintendent. Also, most of the training is basically conducted by individuals without experience in solving the educational crises that the superintendent must face. This area probably has some relationship to how superintendents respond to crisis. The present study is based upon the superintendent and his response to crisis, but it does not consider the superintendent's educational background or experiences prior to the superintendency. This was done because the study was not on superintendents; it was on crisis management.

Third, the present study did not include administrators from various levels to see if they respond to the various characteristics of crisis differently than superintendents. This is an interesting but future stage in this area of research. Also, introducing administrators from various levels into the study would reduce its validity because of wide difference in the types of crises faced by various school administrators.

The above components, in summary, were not included in the present study. They seem worthwhile but were just beyond the scope of the present research. In addition, the present study has the following limitations:

(1) The use of a questionnaire to assess responses to crisis situations is artificial and may not measure how the superintendent would respond to real life situations. Since this study is addressed to identifying hypotheses for more empirical situations, this limitation is not serious.

(2) This study was limited to superintendents in Rhode Island, and the generalizability of the results of the study are strictly limited to that population. To the degree that the population of Rhode Island superintendents is similar to those in other states, the findings of this study may apply.

(3) Very little previous research has been conducted in this area, and this factor imposes some limitation on this present effort. Most of the research and literature had to be "translated" into educational terminology and philosophy.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of the literature for this study focused predominantly upon crisis situations in education and administrators' responses to crises that they experienced as part of their job. Also, it was concerned with the characteristics of crisis in relation to the field of education and how these characteristics might influence decisions by school administrators during periods of crisis. A thorough search of the literature was accomplished through several sources: (1) periodicals and texts; (2) DATRIX, a computerized retrieval system for identifying relevant doctoral dissertation; (3) several computerized searches of the ERIC system; and (4) a review of Current Index to Journals in Education, a summary of journal articles. Time span for the literature search was from 1950 to the present with major emphasis being placed on information available from 1965 to the present.

Crisis is defined in a variety of contexts. It is discussed in terms of escalation of war and foreign policy by Ole R. Holsti. He views crisis from the response made by individuals or groups to such situations. The stress is placed specifically upon national leaders, and the context is the international scene. Holsti defines crisis, then, as

"a situation of unanticipated threat to important values and restricted decision time."[1]

James Gavin claims that America itself is in crisis. Crisis for Gavin is America's confrontation with the scientific revolution which has resulted in such problems as pollution and over-population. He claims that this crisis is a surprise as a result of the knowledge gap that exists between the reality of the world and what we believe it to be. In support of Gavin's definition, Daniel Callahan presents the thesis that the era of technology in America has produced many good outcomes at a price which created many new evils. He cites population and genetics as problems generated by America's advanced technology.[2]

In the context of economics, John Kenneth Galbraith defines crisis in terms of the planning system and the individual. The crisis revolves around the difference in their purpose. The neoclassical model is the point of crisis in economics for Galbraith. He lists complaints concerning the modern economy which are part of this crisis. Some of these are: (1) irrational performance, (2) the distribution of income, (3) the lack of function of some industry products, (4) the economy's effect on the environment, (5) the unre-

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[1]Ole R. Holsti, Crisis Escalation War (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press and Vail-Ballow Press, 1972), p. 8.

[2]James W. Gavin, Crisis Now (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 7-9.

sponsiveness of the large corporation to the public will, (6) the tendency toward inflation, and (7) the growth between industries that cause others to be unable to supply what they require.[1]

Howard James defines crisis in the context of the United States' judicial system. He suggests that crisis has been brought about by the increase in tension and social and technological change.[2] This crisis has affected the courts as well as the persons involved, which includes judges and their decisions. Of particular mention are the decisions of the Supreme Court. It has forced desegr gation, eliminated prayer from schools, reapportioned state legislatures, and protected the rights of men and women accused of criminal acts. These are the crises that the courts have had to face in recent years.

In summary, crisis may be defined as an occurrence which brings about change. This change may be positive or negative and usually involves opposing groups. The term is defined to fit the particular topic of concern and very often has been the critical period of success or failure. More specifically, crisis may be defined in terms of its characteristics: (1) stress, the amount of pressure that the crisis places on those that are involved; (2) the brief period of

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[1]John Kenneth Galbraith, Economics and the Public Purpose (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973), pp. 3-38.

[2]Howard James, Crisis in the Courts (New York: David McKay Co., 1968), p. ix.

time during which a decision must be made and all alternatives are weighed; (3) uncertainty in relation to the outcome of events; (4) the amount of community or political involvement; and (5) modification of organizational standards.

The identification of specific definitions of crisis has occurred in the past twenty years. The principal investigations of crises have been in the areas of politics and economics.

Crises in Education

Crisis in education can be defined in terms of the campus revolt. This type of crisis involves rebellions and the taking of buildings by students. It involves the calling of the National Guard, and the open confrontation of the students, faculty, and administration. Crisis here is not merely a confrontation over demands, but it is a show of power. History of this type of crisis can be traced to the rebellion at Columbia University in the spring of 1968 when students occupied five University buildings for a week and caused the University to suspend normal operations for the remainder of the semester. Before Columbia, the pattern of taking buildings had been established in several other schools beginning with the University of California and the Berkeley Free Speech Movement. Since that time, each campus crisis has been seen as peculiar to the campus on which it occurred. The cause of campus crisis is that students are now seeking a university which is relevant for them; this relevance is

in relation to such social problems as poverty, human degradation, war, racism, and sexism. Through a revolution on campus, the students feel that they can change the values of the university and society.[1]

Bernard Iddings Bell defines crisis in terms of educational philosophy. He claims that our educational system is defective in its understanding of man. He agrees with John Dewey in that he feels education should be democratic. Crisis occurs when democracy does not exist and the community is no longer of importance in education. As part of the crisis in education, Bell points to the quality gaps in American education which occurred after World War II when education in the United States was opened to many students through the G.I. Bill. For Bell, this is where the crisis began because education was not ready to handle this large increase in population nor did it have the variety of programs, curriculum, personnel, and other necessary educational tools. Education has matured and developed a variety of faults which we now have to face.[2]

In relation to educational systems, Phillip Coombs says that crisis has been caused by such things as a shortage

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[1]See Joanne Grant, Confrontation on Campus (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1969), p. ix-xx; and The Cox Commission Report, Crisis at Columbia (New York: Random House, Inc., 1968), pp. 4-25.

[2]Bernard Iddings Bell, Crisis in Education (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1949), pp. 2-5.

of everything but students. He also states that educational systems have learned to overcome these crises and have learned to live with them. He points to the worldwide crisis in education to be the difference between the educational system and its environment.[1]

For Charles E. Silberman educational crisis is in the classroom. This crisis is not the fault of parents, teachers, administrators, or students--it is the fault of each one of us. Everything done in education should be questioned. This does not mean that educators should not always be striving to improve education. Silberman is concerned with how educators act and teach as opposed to what they teach. Silberman views the student as an individual with a rate of progress and development that differs from other students. Part of the crisis Silberman suggests is that educators do not realize this. Realizing that teachers, principals, and superintendents are caring people, Silberman believes that they must think seriously about the consequences of crisis, and they must have strong ideas about the purpose of education.[2]

Marcus Foster defines the role of the administrator in relation to the urban educational crisis. This role is now very different from the type that existed several years

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[1]Phillip H. Coombs, The World Educational Crisis A Systems Analysis (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 3-6.

[2]Charles E. Silberman, Crisis in the Classroom (New York: Random House, 1970), pp. vii-37.

ago. The administrator is now a change agent and must be ready to face crisis as it occurs. Foster believes that all our basic institutions, including the schools, are caught up in an endless crisis. To ignore this phenomenon and offer simple solutions is all part of this crisis. He states that crisis response by administrators or teachers will determine outcome. Also, Foster suggests that the peak of crisis sometimes provides the best opportunity for beginning to set things right.[1]

Finally, the definition of educational crisis is viewed by John H. Rodriguez by focusing on superintendent behavior in response to a crisis situation. He defines crisis as a demand on an organization to respond or make a decision accompanied by a determination on the part of decision makers that a response is necessary. Rodriguez studied those educational crises that the superintendent must face in his position as the head of the public school system. He mentions that the demand for a response or decision interacts with the actual response, culminating in increased or decreased crisis.[2]

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[1]Marcus A. Foster, Making Schools Work (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, n.d.), pp. 31-41.

[2]John H. Rodriguez, "Superintendent Behavior in Crisis Situations" (Ph. D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1973), p. 2.

Characteristics of Crisis

Crises have specific characteristics that can be used to identify them. One characteristic of a crisis is time. A crisis is often portrayed as something which occurs without planning or is contrary to what has been planned. It allows little time for consideration of what response or action should be followed. Leonard C. Hawes and David H. Smith have suggested that crises occur as a temporary disruption of the system. This disruption has a cause, a beginning, and ends with change. The system remains stable until the next disruption occurs. Crisis, then, is an evolving event which goes through cycles and occurs intermittently. The seriousness of the crisis is determined partially by the length of time or duration and the amount of time available for response.[1]

Superintendents' time is limited. "The hours of the day, the days of the week, and weeks of the year are never quite long enough for a school administrator."[2] Many superintendents consider time spent on crisis as an interruption of their normal work routine or just not part of their job. Generally, this does not seem to be the consensus of opinion in various texts on administrative theory which describe the

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[1]Leonard C. Hawes and David H. Smith, "A Critique of Assumptions Underlying the Study of Communication in Conflict," The Quarterly Journal of Speech, December 1973, p. 425.

[2]Frederick J. Moffitt, "He who budgets his time may end up with some to waste," Nations Schools, April 1967, p. 12.

school administrator in the light of the problems which occur unexpectedly or which allow little time for a decision.

A second characteristic of crises is stress. It is closely related to time. Stress is often looked upon as a hindrance, but the literature generally points out that the chief school administrator must not only be comfortable with stress but enjoy it. However, Bertrom S. Brown suggests that "stress does seem to be uncomfortable for most administrators; but in small doses, it does little damage. It (sic) only becomes destructive when the stress goes beyond the administrator's level of tolerance."[1] There has been little written in the literature pertaining to the superintendent's ability to tolerate crisis.

William J. Gore has stated that stress is created by any event which occurs in an organization. Action sought and denied will create a form of behavior that may be described as compensatory. Since the superintendent is constantly involved in actions, perhaps this is a source of his stress. Another application of a comment made by Gore should be considered:

> A new pattern of activity, as in the case of problem formulation, generates considerable stress because of the potential threats and benefits implicit in our open question. Even a heavily sanctioned

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[1]Bertrom S. Brown, "Stress," Today's Education, September 1972, pp. 48-50.

behavior may produce stress, for it is at best compromise, sometimes an unhappy compromise.[1]

The literature portrays the superintendent as the target for stress, and provides him with the task of controlling such stress. Gore suggests that administrators must evaluate which stresses need their attention. He feels that in relation to all stress, there should be some expectation that serves to categorize its intensity. Gore suggests that the following three questions be posed by the administrator:

(1) Does the stress influence the very character of the organization?

(2) Does the stress determine the final output of impact on the organization?

(3) How does this stress influence the role of the organization in its institutional setting?

Gore's thoughts may be applied to the stress that a superintendent must contend with in his position.[2]

The fact that crisis occurs without warning in most instances may be related to stress. The crisis usually is in opposition to goals which the superintendent has set. Gore provides a thorough explanation of stress and relates it to tension. This has some interesting characteristics that might be related to the superintendents' reactions to

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[1]William J. Gore, Administrative Decision-Making: A Heuristic Model (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964), pp. 38-40.

[2]Ibid.

crisis as well as in the description of crisis itself. There is a relationship drawn by Gore between stress and the decision-making process.

Gore believes that stress can be accommodated by: (1) presenting radical solutions to the crisis, (2) redefining a basic goal, (3) vengence toward individuals or groups responsible, and (4) blaming someone else for the crisis. He also draws the following conclusions about stress:

> (1) It is a potent force within the organization.
>
> (2) They are an overtone of almost all human existence, but they are determinative and controlling within the emotional world that people construct for themselves and within which they attempt to deal with their never-completely socialized motives.
>
> (3) Tensions function as a medium of exchange and make possible the comparison of otherwise unrelated pressures, goals, demands, attitudes, hopes, values, and expectations. Since many tensions are unarticulated, it is impossible either to account for preferences that are formed or to explain the process.
>
> (4) The tension or stress network is seen as a response mechanism paralleling and combining at some points with the decision-making process when the objects of activity cannot be identified but some common response is necessary; it is an extension of the decision-making process when reasoned comparison is impossible, yet a choice between values must be made.[1]

A third characteristic common to crisis is the demand for decision. It involves a threat "to high priority values of the organization and is unanticipated."[2] Alvin W. Holst

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[1]Ibid, p. 47.

[2]Edwin M. Bridges, "Student Unrest and Crisis Decision-Making," Administrator's Notebook 18 (December 1969): 1.

points out that the "influence of school administrators upon the educational climate can be attributed in part to their decisions (or lack of, which results from the initial decision to make decisions), and probably more directly by their methods of decision making."[1] He goes further to suggest that styles of decision-making can be plotted along a continuum with one extreme being represented by "snap" decisions based upon feelings or archaic information while the other extreme is represented by the act of making a slightly delayed decision only after critically and objectively considering the reality of the crisis. Holst suggests that where an administrator falls on the continuum will determine his style of leadership and suggests that "snap" decisions are made by the more authoritarian type of administrator.[2]

The literature shows evidence that decision-making reflects the inner beliefs and attitudes of the decision-maker. For example, Allport has noted: "If the administrator is clear in his mind concerning his value orientation, if he knows his major aims, decisions on specific issues automatically follow."[3] Combining this with what was described by

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[1]Alvin W. Holst, "Educational Climate, A Prime Responsibility of the School Administrator," Educational Climate, November 1973, p. 169.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Gordon W. Allport, Basic Considerations for a Psychology of Personality, cited by Alvin W. Holst, "Educational Climate A Prime Responsibility of the School Administrator," Educational Climate, November 1973, p. 169.

Holst, the researcher can see a difference in opinion in the literature about the process of decision-making and those attributes which affect this process.

Gordon L. Lippitt and Warren H. Schmidt analyze the process of decision-making and consider the aspect of risk involved in making decisions. They state that: "Management must decide how much risk to take in the light of two criteria: (1) the goals by which achievement is to be measured, and (2) the odds against success in reaching them."[1]

Warren Barr Knox points out that poor decisions should be gone over again, and if possible, another decision should be made in its place. Although some administrators feel that this shows that they are poor administrators, it really only means that they made a poor decision. Mistakes that are admitted are usually forgiven, but reinforcement of a poor decision over and over will result in a poor administrator. Decisions are not always permanent because people, programs, and problems change; however, decision-making should be made in terms of positive action.[2]

Decision-making is not a smooth process. It is in contrast with other productive activities because it is not regular or continuous. Decision-making is a heuristic behavior--that is, it calls for improvision, spontaneity, and

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[1]Gordon L. Lippitt and Warren H. Schmidt, "Crises in a Developing Organization," Harvard Business Review, November-December 1967, p. 104.

[2]Warren Barr Knox, Eye of the Hurricane (Corvallis, Oregon State University Press, 1973), p. 45.

accommodation on the part of the administrator making the decision. It is unlike more rational activities that are expected and regularly productive. The heuristic process tends to press the status on calling for change and freedom from the normal routine. Often heuristic behavior comes into conflict with the traditional organizational values. Sometimes these organizational values might be almost universally accepted, but during time of heuristic decision, they are questioned. Gore suggests that we learn decision-making as we learn other behavior. It is built around patterns of behavior that we generally understand and which are socially sanctioned.[1] There appears to be little or no work available on this area in relation to crisis situations, and more particularly in relation to educational decisions in crisis.

Decision-making can be a more complex process than initially described by Gore. As the subject is considered in greater depth, Gore presents the "adaptive decision." The adaptive decision is "a device used to realign a routine pattern of behavior when it becomes unexpectedly costly." Adaptive decisions are closely related to crisis decision-making and may be beneficial to the school administrator because they can modify a pattern of activity and reestablish a stable and productive flow of activity. They can remove the immediate source of pressure during a crisis and relieve

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[1]Gore, Administrative Decision-Making: A Heuristic Model, pp. 28-38.

the built-up pressure by providing an alternative. The administrator, however, should exercise caution when making adaptive decisions that additional stress is not added to the crisis. If such stress is added, the administrator should try a second adaptive decision which could possibly lead to a satisfactory pattern that will become eventually routine.[1]

A fourth characteristic of crises is the change in organizational standards. Lippitt and Schmidt have suggested that the true criteria for determining the stage of development for business organizations is the manner in which they cope with predictable organizational crises. Perhaps this might be related to the field of education, and more particularly, to the superintendent in crisis management. The organization may be defined as an assemblage of people, procedures, and facilities--which experiences at least six confrontations. These confrontations are: (1) to create a new organization, (2) to survive as a viable system, (3) to gain stability, (4) to gain reputation and develop pride, (5) to achieve uniqueness and adaptability, and (6) to contribute to society. It is worthy to note that the organization's confrontations are its crises.[2]

Rodriguez suggests that the modification of organizational standards can be related to the educational organization.

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[1]Ibid., pp. 130-134.

[2]Gordon L. Lippitt and Warren H. Schmidt, "Crises in a Developing Organization," pp. 102-112.

He points out that superintendents respond to a crisis with actions that affect the crisis.[1] Work done by Herman and Milburn suggest that certain responses can be correlated with organizational consequences and reduction of crisis. Herman, for example, points out the fact that authority might be contracted in an organization in response to a crisis. This may be evidenced in the educational setting when the superintendent, for example, contracts the authority of a principal.[2]

Halpin distinguishes between the formal and informal organization. He points out that the formal organization has the legal operation and authority constraints of the society in which it exists. He classifies public school organization as a formal organization of which the superintendent is the administrative head.[3]

The element of uncertainty in relation to crisis situations is another characteristic to be considered. This element is common to many types of crisis. The uncertainty is in the outcome of the response or decision to be made by

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[1]Rodriguez, p. 18.

[2]See Charles F. Herman, "Some Consequences of Crisis Which Limit the Viability of Organizations," Administrative Science Quarterly, June 1963, pp. 61-82; and Thomas W. Milburn, "The Management of Crises" (Mimeographed paper, 1971).

[3]Andrew Halpin, "A Paradigm for Research on Administrator Behavior," in Administrative Behavior in Education, eds. Ronald F. Campbell and Russell T. Gregg (New York: Harper and Bros., 1957), pp. 155-199.

the administrator. March and Simon define an alternative as uncertain if the decision-maker does not have a conception of the probabilities attached to it. Uncertainty is seen as a type of conflict that the individual must face. It appears, as knowledge of the probabilities attached to the alternative varies, the uncertainty associated with the outcome will also vary.[1]

It has been suggested by Edwin M. Briggs that uncertainty can be reduced by prediction. The administrator must consider the futures which might alternately occur in contrast to what his plans will result. The purposes for this are: (1) to avoid ahead of time certain problems before they occur, (2) to make plans for minimizing long and short range effects of serious difficulties that might occur, and (3) relevant research can be located and used to learn about various facts of alternative futures. Briggs attempts to illustrate how forecasting the possible can serve the purposes mentioned above. Also, he shows how present school practices will lead to student-initiated reform under conditions of crisis claiming that the occasion for decision will have the following properties: (1) it threatens high priority values of the organization or the decision-maker; (2) it demands that a response be made in a restricted amount of time; (3) it calls for an unprogrammed response, one that

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[1]James G. March and Herbert A. Simon, Organizations (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1958), p. 114.

was unexpected by the decision-maker. Bridges also considers how the decisional processes of individuals are affected by crisis conditions and that some of the possible consequences are for the organization.[1]

The School Administrator and Crisis

Robert E. Jennings considers the role of the principal in student activism. Reference is made to Trump's survey of principals on student activism indicating that activism is not understood. Many of the principals over-reacted to the survey combining old style discipline problems with new style demands by group action under the label of protest.[2] Jennings points out that there is a "blurred quality" to activism. This "blurred quality" is common to other crisis situations. Jennings also makes some observations on the youth movement in schools:

> It is difficult to state why this sudden surge of youth involvement and demand for an active role in the affairs of society has come about. The multiplicity of factors is great and to unravel the skein will take more study than has been done to date. However, it is clear that the movement is without precedent... Furthermore, this is not

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[1]Edwin M. Bridges, "Student Unrest and Crisis Decision-Making," p.2.

[2]J. Lloyd Trump and Jane Hunt, "Nature and Extent of Student Activism," Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals 53 (May 1969), cited by Robert E. Jennings, "Student Activism: A Perspective and Strategy," The Clearing House 46 (October 1971) : 86-91.

> a "youth must have its fling" kind of situation. The life style and the forms of political and social change being developed now can be expected to continue with the next several generations into their later lives.[1]

Mark A. Chesler tells us in "Student and Administration Crises," that frustration and anger within students cause crises for administrators. The understanding of such crises begins with what the student feels he faces as a crisis in his educational experience.[2] Chesler lists the following "student crises":

(1) Youngsters have a variety of complaints about the high school curriculum.

(2) Many students resent what they feel are archaic and traditional forms of classroom instruction, where teachers lecture and students are expected to listen docilely.

(3) The reliance upon teacher and administrator control over student behavior generates the high number of rules and regulations by which the school day is organized.

(4) In many schools students argue that teachers and administrators do not behave in courteous and respectful ways toward them.

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[1]Jennings, p. 87.

[2]Mark A. Chesler, "Student and Administration Crises," Educational Leadership, October 1969, pp. 34-38.

(5) Students' concerns about racism focus upon disciplinary or instructional behavior which appears to unjustly single out blacks for differential treatment.

(6) In a similar vein, some students are concerned deeply with their schools' apparent disregard for, or ignorance of, serious social ills.

(7) A final tragedy is that many teachers and administrators who would and should object to such violations of educational principals through common sense and even decency do not.

Chesler believes that crisis in the form of school disruption is an opportunity for educators to self-evaluate themselves and that the crisis benefits the educational institution as well as the individual career of the administrator:

> Recent events make it clear that repression and suppression, or denial and escape, do not respond to key educational issues at stake in school crises; they do not even offer the hope of rapid de-escalation of tension and conflict. It is the context of seeing change as vital that permits more creative response to school crises.

He further suggests the following devices for reducing the level of conflict. First, in the midst of crisis one can often establish formal mechanisms for social interaction that crosscut prior lines of status distinction in the school;

in this way students and teachers or different social classes and races can be put into immediate interaction around school issues. Second, the immediate establishment of grievance handling procedures. The final tactic offered is a pattern of formal negotiation between conflicting parties.[1]

Natt B. Burbank, in his book The Superintendent of Schools, His Headache and Rewards, presents a picture of the high-pressure area in which the school superintendent works. Its purpose is to forewarn veteran and neophyte administrators concerning a number of problems which they may not have met. Most of these challenges are new, even to experienced superintendents, since they are products of the rapidly changing national scene. The topics discussed include: (1) a description of the superintendency, (2) the preparation necessary for successful superintendents, (3) the roles of the superintendent in the school system, (4) the pressures on the superintendent, (5) the relationship between the superintendent and local government, (6) the state and federal impact on the school administrator, (7) conservation in American education, (8) the time problem facing the superintendent, and (9) the superintendent's job security.[2]

During a period of little more than a century the school superintendency has gone through five eras. The

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Natt B. Burbank, The Superintendent of Schools, His Headaches and Rewards (Danville, Illinois: Printers and Publishers, Inc., 1968), pp. 3-51.

early school superintendent was a schoolmaster, a man who kept school. The next era saw the emergence of the statesman, or prophet superintendent, whose appeal to the conscience of America and whose vision of the possibilities of free public education were in the tradition of Horace Mann and Henry Barnard. The third era, starting about fifty years ago, produced the manager-superintendent. The techniques of mass production and the organization structure of large corporate enterprises led school superintendents to apply the same techniques to the educational enterprise. During this period, the superintendent emerged as a proponent of universal education through the high school and as a leader in developing a diverse and comprehensive curriculum intended to meet the needs of all children and youth. The fourth era was that of the technician superintendent--the era of scientific management, of financial accounting, and budget making, of school law, and of a host of other specialties seemed to call for more specific preparation, and the school superintendent, though broadly educated, all too often became a technically trained expert. The fifties ushered in the era of the professional school superintendent. World affairs called for new dimensions of leadership, educational statesmanship, and genuine professionalism.

The era of the technical school superintendent obviously requires different preparation for the school superintendent. In this era the superintendent turned to the massive literature in business and industrial management for

insights and procedures that could be adapted to school administration. Very little professional literature was available for the preparation of school superintendents. As the technical demand grew, the professional preparation programs moved rapidly to meet them. Presently, the professional superintendent of schools should have the breadth and depth of knowledge, supplemented by many technical skills, deep convictions, and a sense of mission to be performed through the institution of public education. In addition, he should have some training in crisis management, which is not evident in most training programs for superintendents.

Richard K. Morton illustrates the fact that this is a period of changing climate of opinion. He suggests that schools have very emotionalized issues coming into them from society which create very complex problems.[1] Forms of aggression relating to individuals or groups are a result of social tension. Sometimes the public schools are scapegoats to resolve confusion or fears of the society.

The need for a value framework for educational administration has been suggested by Orin B. Graff and others. They make this suggestion in the light of the difference between administration and educational administration. Educational administration appears to have greater responsibility for the cherished human values than do many other kinds of

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[1]Richard K. Morton, "To Face Decision and Crisis," Improving College and University Teaching, Summer 1973, p. 172.

administration.[1] Graff pointed out special conditions in which educational administration operates. First, the school is a unique institution in that they are legally charged with providing education for the citizenry. Second, the school takes its direction from all community institutions. Third, education and schools must be aimed at human development. Fourth, the school is the vortex of conflicting values. Finally, the closeness of school and community interaction is included. It is these last two which are most closely related to the present research.[2]

The following are the main findings established by the review of the literature:

(1) Most of the literature on crisis management relates to business organizations, stressing the ability of the administrator to cope with crisis.

(2) The only study found on crisis management in education was by John H. Rodriguez. Thus, the literature is lacking in this area, establishing the need for this research.

(3) Most of the literature found has an indirect

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[1]Orin B. Graff et al., Philosophic Theory and Practice in Educational Administration (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1966), pp. 1-32.

[2]Ibid., pp. 190-247.

relationship to the present study.

(4) There has been little empirical research done on the superintendent in a crisis situation; more particularly, there is no information about Rhode Island superintendents in such situations.

In summary, there is much prescriptive material regarding the superintendency, but the literature is seriously lacking in empirical evidence. The only study identified has been done by John H. Rodriguez. This study focuses on how superintendents respond to crisis and on the consequences of the responses. As the chief administrative officer of the school organization, it is assumed that the demand for a decision or response is generally directed toward the superintendent. It is his actions oriented to the reduction of crisis which are of major interest in this study.

Rodriguez points out that school crises differ from those found in international, military, or industrial arenas to the degree that the social context differs. Also, he suggests that each crisis has a unique dimension that lies in the historical and/or social behaviors to provide a basis for developing viable management strategies.[1]

Looking at the Rodriguez study more closely, there are several aspects which should be mentioned. First, Rodriguez uses Halpin's paradigm to formulate a scheme for

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[1]Rodriguez, pp. 3-5.

research of administrator behavior which would provide for systematic classification of variables, and to conceptualize administrator behavior. The paradigm is considered from its four major components: (1) the organizational task, (2) administrator behavior, (3) variables associated with administrative behavior, and (4) criteria for administrative effectiveness. Second, the three basic criteria for research sites were: (1) the school district experienced crisis during the past two years, (2) an incumbent school board member had been defeated during the tenure of the present superintendent, and (3) the school districts were located within the four Southern California counties used in the Claremont Studies. Three school districts located in two of the counties met these criteria. Third, the principal mode of gathering data was by interview of the superintendent. Two of the interviews were conducted in the superintendent's own office and the third was conducted in the office of a county superintendent of schools. These interviews were principally to locate research sites, but some information relevant to superintendent actions was also obtained. Finally, Rodriguez offered no hypothesis in Chapter I but did state in his final chapter that the research expectation was to determine if, during a crisis period, there was a change in the authority structure, and if so, was it attributable to an action of the superintendent.[1]

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[1]Ibid., pp. 4-10.

The analysis of the data by Rodriguez provided evidence that during crisis there was a tendency for the superintendent to contract authority. An infringement upon the superintendent's time was noted. With the respect to Herman's predicted consequence of the contraction of authority leading to increased stress on authority units, there was no direct evidence that this occurred. However, there was evidence that the contraction of authority added stress on the superintendent, but it was impossible to assess the degree as differentiated from the stress of the crisis situation. In two of the three cases studied, superintendents professed to have generated strategies tc manage crisis. The third superintendent revealed that in the past the situations for which no management plan had been formulated were the occasions that caused the most difficulty for the school district. In all three cases presented by Rodriguez, the bargaining process was used in at least the latter phase of the crisis. There was no evidence that the managers of school crisis in this study used methods of soliciting public support to control the outcome of a school crisis issue.[1]

Rodriguez believes that it is the larger society that specifies the task to the school organization, in the form of normative statements. He also suggests that what actually occurs and what ought to happen may be very different. As a result, this is the root of the crisis. To

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[1]Ibid., pp. 72-83.

provide a practical application of this, Rodriguez cites the example of equal educational opportunities, which the larger society commands the schools to achieve. The fact that some educators have practiced discrimination has been the root of school crisis in several parts of the nation. Rodriguez is attempting to define the organizational task as "an ideal set of objectives for the organization which are prescribed by external sources." He differentiates the "task" from the "problem" as a modification made by the administrator to reach a desired outcome. Reference is made by Rodriguez to Halpin's intraorganization variables as well as extraorganizational variables.[1]

Halpin defines the organization as a special kind of social group whose members have varying responsibilities to reach a common task of the group. He notes that informal organizations exist within the formal organization.[2] This has some importance to the present study of managing crisis in education. Also, he makes reference to two fundamental sets of variables which define the operations of an organized group. These are:

(1) Variables which define formal organization. These are:

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[1]Ibid., pp. 3-5.

[2]Andrew Halpin, "A Paradigm for Research on Administrator Behavior in Education," in Administrative Behavior in Education, eds. Roald F. Campbell and Russell T. Gregg (New York: Harper and Bros., 1957), cited by John Rodriguez, Superintendent Behavior in Crisis Situations (Ph. D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1973), p. 2.

a. Responsibility variables (the work one is expected to do).
b. Formal interaction variables (the persons with whom one is expected to work).

(2) Variables which define informal organizations. These are:
a. Work performance variables (the tasks one actually performs).
b. Informal interaction variables (the person with whom one actually works).[1]

In conclusion, the literature on crises in education is scanty. This literature compliments itself to define crisis and its characteristics by providing common similarities. The literature on crisis in education for the most part involves student revolts or reactions to societal conflicts by students. There is little directly written about crises management in education, but some of the more traditional literature may be applied to crisis situations. Although the research in crisis management is not adequate, there has been one study in this area by Rodriguez. Rodriguez does reveal the superintendent in crisis management. However, there is a lack of knowledge on how superintendent's respond to crisis and the characteristics of crisis.

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[1]Andrew Halpin, "A Paradigm for Research on Administrative Behavior," in Administrative Behavior in Education, eds. Roald F. Campbell and Russell T. Gregg (New York: Harper and Bros., 1957), pp. 155-199.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

The procedures used in this study were typical of those used in a survey research design. A set of significant positive relationships between characteristics of educational crisis and administrator responses was thought to exist. A proposal was written, and a variety of searches were conducted to identify related literature and research. The literature was reviewed and a set of hypotheses were stated. A questionnaire was not available for use; therefore, one was developed, pilot-tested, and distributed. The appropriate measurements were taken and the collected data were summarized and analyzed for significant findings and implications.

Selecting the Problem

The problem was identified by a broad search of the literature on educational management and subtopics that served to focus on the problem. After viewing Dissertation Abstracts, the meager research available indicated that the topic of educational crisis management was a fertile area for study. There were other corollary reasons for selecting this problem. First, education had become more involved

in all types of crisis situations since World War II, yet there was very little description of how the administrator in education responded to crises. Second, education in the United States was provided equally for all races through integration laws. This had caused crises relating to equality of educational opportunity. The manager in educational crisis must determine approaches to solving such situations. Third, since crises in education appeared to be a challenge for the administrator, the solution of such problems seemed to be an interesting one. Fourth, the institutions of society (like the family, religion, and industry) had resigned many of their duties and responsibilities to schools. This overload of responsibilities had become part of the problem. Fifth, the term educational crisis management tended to denote some control or manipulation over crises situations, and the present study was directed to analyze how superintendents establish such control.

The problem was directly applied to the elementary and secondary levels of public education. Crisis at these levels began about the same time that it did in higher education. For example, in New York, high-school students decided they could force changes in the existing educational system at the time of rebellion at Columbia in the spring of 1968. Elementary and secondary education, however, did not have the facilities or manpower to handle the types of crises that would evolve out of higher education. It had been more traditional than the university or college and

had the major objective of teaching the basic skills to children. These skills (reading, writing, and arithmatic) were taught with standard techniques to the average student without much individualization. There was rarely a questioning of school procedures involving the teaching and learning process as well as any other part of education at these levels. However, the societal changes and crises that affected the higher levels reached elementary and secondary education. At these levels, crises seemed more devastating because of the variety of situations that occurred and the changes that were inevitable in American public education.

Since the superintendent of schools is the administrator responsible for elementary and secondary education in a public school system, his management of crisis is of particular interest. He often accepts the responsibility for the operation of every facet of the school system. Almost all of the events taking place in the elementary and secondary school structure are designed and directed under his leadership. The superintendent must provide leadership while he manages the enterprise. His role requires him to be able to adjust his operation and techniques to meet the new patterns of society. Because traditional methods may fail at solving new problems, a superintendent must be creative at seeking solutions. He must be able to develop and use new tools and methods. The new role also requires the educational leader to be familiar with new areas of knowledge such as anthropology, economics, labor relations, and

sociology. The superintendent must be aware of what is going on in his schools and in his community; he must be fully informed about school operations by building administrators. He cannot afford to place himself on a pedestal so as to be inaccessible to his constituents.

The problem, in summary, was identified and selected from educational research and literature for the reasons mentioned in the preceding paragraphs. Crisis was viewed through the superintendency which was evolving to meet new demands in education. The evolution of the superintendent's role and details concerning the training of superintendents are given more in the Review of the Literature.

Research Procedures

This study was conducted through a six-stage process. The first stage began as general research on the topic of educational administration. A consideration of general areas of interest to the writer evolved into several topics. Each topic was considered and classified as to: (1) importance, (2) interest of the writer, (3) need for a study on this topic, (4) previous research, and (5) possible limitations which might occur.

The topic of crises management in education was chosen. It had the greatest possibilities in relation to current needs and importance to school administrators. This topic centered around one fundamental question: "Is there a relationship between characteristics of crises and

administrator response?" Difficulties were evident in that crises could not be studied directly. Often, they occur without warning; and therefore, they are difficult to observe.

To complement the first stage of general research, a proposal was developed. This proposal served as a base for the early research and served to provide the direction of the study and possible implications that might be drawn. After completing the proposal, searches of the educational literature were done by using the computer on the ERIC and DATRIX systems. The literature, as a result of these first computer searches, brought focus to the proposal. Therefore, the proposal was revised to meet the extended information base established by the computer searches. Other literature searches were undertaken to obtain more information about what had been written and studied concerning the various aspects of crisis. This involved those resources that were directly as well as indirectly related to crisis.

Questionnaire Development

A search for an instrument which had been used previously and could be adapted to the purposes of the present study met with no success. Therefore, the development of an instrument was the second stage. The instrument included four crisis descriptions and four corresponding questionnaires: Each crisis description was provided to the superintendent, and the questionnaires were directly related to

the crisis situations. All four crises were developed in relation to the characteristics of crises evident in the literature and on the basis of finding out more about how administrators would respond to similar types of crises. Each question was evaluated on the basis of necessity to the study and weighted in relation to validity and importance.

The Pilot Test

The third stage was a pilot test of the questionnaire: This pilot test was conducted with school administrators at various levels in an inner-city school system. There were three assistant superintendents, one student personnel administrator, one principal, one vice-principal, and two department chairmen. The total number of participants were eight. All had experience with school crises of varying types in several levels of school administration in Rhode Island. Superintendents were not included in the pilot test because this would have reduced the sample for the study. However, the purpose of improving the questionnaire itself was achieved because those who participated had some practical experience with crises in Rhode Island, some experience working with a superintendent, and some prior experience in using or developing a questionnaire.

A sample cover letter, a narrative of a crisis situation, and a questionnaire were distributed to each administrator in the pilot test. The reviewers were asked to place

themselves in the position of a superintendent faced with the crisis and to respond to each question asked in the questionnaire. Also, they were to consider possible changes that might be made to improve the questionnaire. Within a week, each participant was contacted by telephone or in person and an appointment was made for a discussion of the questionnaire. These discussion sessions lasted from thirty to sixty minutes and provided for comments to be made by the respondent. Very often, the respondent had several comments to make that were previously considered in the actual construction of the questionnaire; but at this time, these comments were valuable in making decisions about the technical aspects of the questionnaire. After the respondent made suggestions and comments, he was asked several questions which might not have been mentioned. These questions were generally effective in helping in the revision of the questionnaire and the cover letter. (These are contained in Appendix A.)

Generally, the pilot test was successful as a tool for polishing the cover letter and the questionnaire, and it served as a method for suggesting the amount and type of feedback that might be expected from school administrators on crisis situations. Respondents to the pilot questionnaire were quite willing to provide information on ways to improve the questionnaire based upon their varied experiences. Often, conflicting suggestions on the questionnaire helped the writer to make considerations that might have been

otherwise omitted. Also, in some instances, the suggestions were so varied that the writer decided to maintain his original position.

Revision of Questionnaire

The fourth stage was to revise the cover letter and questionnaire based on the results of the pilot study. The cover letter was rewritten to include some information on the researcher, a greater emphasis was placed on the role of the participant, and a statement on the hypotheses to be investigated was included. The directions were written more formally and consideration was given to the organization of the questionnaire as well as developing the crisis descriptions with more detail. The questions were weighted differently to insure that each response and characteristic of crisis could be measured. Several questions were omitted, and one was added to two of the four forms of questionnaires. (The final cover letter and questionnaire which was distributed to the total sample is enclosed in Appendix B.)

At this point, however, the author did decide to think about ways to get as many respondents to return the questionnaire as possible. The author decided to have each questionnaire printed on colored paper (blue, yellow, green, and orange), and the cover letter printed on white paper. The cover letter was addressed to each superintendent and signed by the writer (not xeroxed). Each superintendent was asked to fill out the questionnaire based upon motives

that could be helpful to their profession and themselves as opposed to any selfish reasons of the researcher. Self-addressed and stamped envelopes were enclosed to facilitate returns.

Administering the Questionnaire

The fifth stage involved administering the questionnaire to the final sample. The sample consisted of thirty-nine superintendents--one for each school district in Rhode Island. There were four different crisis descriptions and four forms of the questionnaire. Each superintendent was sent one of the four crisis descriptions. The distribution of these crisis descriptions and questionnaires was done randomly using a table of random numbers. However, a record of what questionnaires were sent to which superintendents was kept for purposes of follow-up.

Since each superintendent in Rhode Island has to face crisis of varying degrees and types, the sample seemed to be appropriate for gaining information about the responses of Rhode Island superintendents to crisis. The superintendents that comprised the sample ranged in experience from being newly appointed to having served many years in the position of chief school administrator. The population of superintendents did not include any females because there were no female superintendents and did include three acting superintendents. The acting superintendents were appointed on a temporary basis and had experience as assistant superintendents prior to taking the acting position. The size of

the school systems ranged from 100 to 22,000 students. Generally, the superintendents were cooperative and returned the questionnaire within three weeks from the time that they were mailed. After the three week period, a follow-up letter was sent to those superintendents who had not responded.

Treatment of the Data

The sixth stage was the treatment and interpretation of the data. Up until this stage, the data was considered in relation to accumulating as many responses as possible to the questionnaire. However, the purpose of research is to respond to specific questions, and it is to accomplish this that the data was gathered. (The problems that were analyzed in the present research were discussed in greater detail in Chapter I.) A correlational analysis on the data that was collected from the returned questionnaires was done. The responses to the questionnaire were analyzed to determine if there were positive relations (expressed as correlations significant at the .05 level) between characteristics of the crisis and administrator reaction. The hypothesis that certain predictions can be made about crisis situations and administrator response was considered in relation to the data. Also, the data was applied to the sub-hypotheses mentioned in Chapter I.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The analysis is based on data collected from a questionnaire administered to superintendents of schools in Rhode Island. Four forms of the questionnaire were sent to all thirty-nine superintendents in Rhode Island described in Chapter III (see Appendix B). The data collected from the investigation were analyzed using correlational methods. The analysis was designed to answer the basic question of the study:

> Are there significant relationships between the characteristics of crises and administrative responses to those crises?

The main hypothesis was further delineated by establishing several sub-hypotheses based upon previous research and literature. The sub-hypotheses were investigated through correlational analysis.

PRELIMINARY DATA COLLECTED

Questionnaires were sent to all thirty-nine superintendents in Rhode Island, and thirty questionnaires (77 percent) were returned. However, only twenty-nine (74 percent) of the questionnaires were usable (see Table 1). One questionnaire was not usable because the respondent did not complete the questionnaire but did return it with a letter. He stated that he was interested in crises but was recently appointed and felt that his answers would not be in the best interests of the present study.

TABLE 1

QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED

Questionnaires	NUMBER	PERCENT
Sent	39	100
Returned	30	77
Used	29	74
Unusable	1	3

Table 2 lists each question in the questionnaire along with response scales.

TABLE 2

QUESTIONS AND SCALES

NUMBER	QUESTION*	SCALE
1	Given the circumstances of the above crisis, how would you classify its seriousness?	1 (very serious) 5 (not serious)
2	How would your rate of contact with administrators inside your school system change as a result of the request made by the school committee and the reaction of opposing groups?	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)
3	How would your rate of contact with community leaders change as a result of the request made by the school committee and the reaction of opposing groups?	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)
4	Would your rate of contact with other administrators outside your school system change given the above circumstances?	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)
5	In the above situation, your rate of communication with parents would?	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)
6	How certain would you be in your response to the school committee about reducing the budget to parallel population changes?	1 (highly certain) 5 (highly uncertain)

* Questions from form "A" of the questionnaire. For other forms of the questionnaire see Appendix B.

TABLE 2 (cont.)

QUESTIONS AND SCALES

NUMBER	QUESTION*	SCALE
7	Based on the circumstances in the above crisis, would you expect a change in the degree of stress in your administrative organization?	1 (more stress) 5 (no change in stress)
8	Do you feel personal stress in the above situation?	1 (a great deal) 5 (not at all)
9	To what extent would you contract the authority of remaining administrators if a reduction should take place?	1 (not at all) 5 (a great deal)
10	How does the time limitation of two weeks imposed by the above situation affect your decision?	1 (makes decision impossible) 5 (no time limitation)

* Questions from form "A" of the questionnaire. For other forms of the questionnaire see Appendix B.

Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations for the responses made by superintendents to each question in the questionnaire.

TABLE 3

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF SUPERINTENDENT RESPONSES

QUESTIONS	SCALE	MEAN	S.D.
1	1 (very serious) 5 (not serious)	1.68	.94
2	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	4.41	.73
3	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	4.51	.74
4	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	4.10	.86
5	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	2.96	1.05
6	1 (highly certain) 5 (highly uncertain)	3.86	1.20
7	1 (more stress) 5 (no change in stress)	1.89	.67
8	1 (a great deal) 5 (not at all)	1.86	.92
9	1 (not at all) 5 (a great deal)	3.44	1.20
10	1 (decision impossible) 5 (no time limitation)	2.55	1.08

In order to establish that the crisis description used by any respondent did not significantly alter the

responses, an analysis of means and standard deviations by groups was undertaken. This data is presented in Tables 4 through 7. A review of this data indicates that no significant difference among the groups exists and thus the data may be analyzed for the group as a whole.

TABLE 4

RESPONSES ON FORM A
STUDENT POPULATION DECLINE

QUESTIONS	SCALE	MEAN	S.D.
1	1 (very serious) 5 (not serious)	1.48	.93
2	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	4.23	.72
3	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	4.39	.74
4	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	4.31	.86
5	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	2.87	1.04
6	1 (highly certain) 5 (highly uncertain)	3.66	1.20
7	1 (more stress) 5 (no change in stress)	1.69	1.66
8	1 (a great deal) 5 (not at all)	1.69	.90
9	1 (not at all) 5 (a great deal)	3.21	1.21
10	1 (decision impossible) 5 (no time limitation)	2.36	1.08

TABLE 5

RESPONSES ON FORM B
CURRICULUM CRISIS

QUESTIONS	SCALE	MEAN	S.D.
1	1 (very serious) 5 (not serious)	1.80	.94
2	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	4.62	.73
3	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	4.46	.73
4	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	4.88	.84
5	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	3.10	1.06
6	1 (highly certain) 5 (highly uncertain)	4.10	1.21
7	1 (more stress) 5 (no change in stress)	1.99	.67
8	1 (a great deal) 5 (not at all)	2.06	.91
9	1 (not at all) 5 (a great deal)	3.46	1.20
10	1 (decision impossible) 5 (no time limitation)	2.70	1.07

TABLE 6

RESPONSES ON FORM C
CRISIS IN PLACEMENT OF PERSONNEL

QUESTIONS	SCALE	MEAN	S.D.
1	1 (very serious) 5 (not serious)	1.72	.94
2	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	4.18	.74
3	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	4.68	.74
4	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	4.20	.85
5	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	2.90	1.04
6	1 (highly certain) 5 (highly uncertain)	3.95	1.19
7	1 (more stress) 5 (no change in stress)	2.02	.69
8	1 (a great deal) 5 (not at all)	1.91	.93
9	1 (not at all) 5 (a great deal)	3.57	1.21
10	1 (decision impossible) 5 (no time limitation)	2.67	1.09

TABLE 7

RESPONSES ON FORM D
STUDENT DISTURBANCE

QUESTIONS	SCALE	MEAN	S.D.
1	1 (very serious) 5 (not serious)	1.75	.95
2	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	4.59	.73
3	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	4.53	.75
4	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	4.02	.86
5	1 (increase) 5 (decrease)	2.98	1.05
6	1 (highly certain) 5 (highly uncertain)	3.72	1.20
7	1 (more stress) 5 (no change in stress)	1.87	.66
8	1 (a great deal) 5 (not at all)	1.78	.93
9	1 (not at all) 5 (a great deal)	3.53	1.18
10	1 (decision impossible) 5 (no time limitation)	2.48	1.08

Data Analysis

In order to test the sub-hypotheses, correlations were calculated between characteristics of crises in educational administration and superintendents' response. A Pearson product-moment correlation was used to examine the relationships between selected characteristics (based on the literature and previous research) of crisis and the superintendents' responses to the questionnaire. A t-test was used to evaluate the statistical significance of the relationship because of the small size of the sample. An .05 level was used to evaluate the statistical significance of the t-score.

Sub-hypothesis One

The first sub-hypothesis to which the research was directed was:

> There is an inverse relationship between the amount of time perceived available for superintendents to solve the crisis and the degree to which they would contract authority.

This sub-hypothesis was established from the comments of Leonard C. Hawes and Donald H. Smith that crises occur as a temporary disruption of the system. This disruption has a cause, a beginning, and ends with change. The seriousness of the crisis is determined partially by the length of time

or duration and the amount of time available for response. Also, to the degree the superintendents' time is limited in a crisis, it was believed that they would contract authority.[1]

The testing of this sub-hypothesis was accomplished through a comparison of the answers to questions on time (question 10 - How does the time limitation of two weeks imposed by the above situation affect your decision?) and authority (question 2 - How would your rate of contact with administrators inside your school system change as a result of the request made by the school committee and the reaction of the opposing groups?; and question 9 - To what extent would you contract the authority of remaining administrators if a reduction should take place?).

Table 8 displays means, standard deviations, and a correlation for sub-hypothesis one. A correlation of -.672 was calculated. A t-test was performed and the correlation was established as statistically significant at the .001 level.

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[1]Hawes and Smith, pp. 423-435.

TABLE 8

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION
BETWEEN TIME AND AUTHORITY

VARIABLES	MEAN	S.D.	r	df	t-VALUE
Time (question 10)	3.9	1.08	-.672	27	-5.23*
Authority (mean of means) (for questions) (2 and 9)	2.0	.68			

* significant at .001 level

Sub-hypothesis Two

The second sub-hypothesis to which the research was directed was:

> There is a direct relationship between the amount of stress perceived by superintendents and the degree to which they use other resources.

This sub-hypothesis was based on the work of William J. Gore who feels that stress is created by any event which occurs in an organization. The relationship of stress to the use of other resources was selected as a method which the superintendent could employ to control stress. Gore has suggested that administrators must evaluate which stresses need attention. This evaluation most definitely relates to using all

possible resources available to the superintendent. Gore also provides a thorough explanation of stress and relates it to decision-making. He describes the decision-making process in detail and relates it to actions taken during crisis. One of these actions are using other resources.[1] An example of when a superintendent could use other resources is in crisis description C involving the selection of a secondary school administrator. In this crisis, the superintendent could use resources to face the stress imposed upon him by the four pressure groups involved.

This sub-hypothesis was investigated by making a comparison of superintendent responses to questions on stress (sum of the means of question 7 - Based on the circumstances in the above crisis, would you expect a change in the degree of stress in your administrative organization? and question 8 - Do you feel personal stress in the above situation?) and other resources (mean of the means of question 3 - How would your rate of contact with community leaders change as a result of the request made by the school committee and the reduction of opposing groups?; and question 4 - Would your rate of contact with other administrators outside your school system change given the above circumstances?; and question 5 - In the situation your communication with parents...).

A Pearson product-moment correlation was calculated to analyze the relationship between the amount of stress perceived by superintendents and the degree to which they use

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[1]Gore, pp. 19-40.

other resources in solving the crisis. Table 9 displays means, standard deviations, and a correlation for sub-hypothesis two. There is a positive relationship between stress and the use of other resources. A correlation of .43 was established. A t-value of 2.45 was found to be statistically significant at the .05 level.

TABLE 9

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION BETWEEN STRESS AND USE OF OTHER RESOURCES

VARIABLES	MEAN	S.D.	r	df	t-VALUE
Stress (mean of means) (for questions) (7 and 8)	3.75	1.18	+.430	27	+2.45*
Use of resources (mean of means) (for questions) (3, 4, and 5)	8.62	1.42			

* significant at .05 level

Sub-hypothesis Three

The third sub-hypothesis to which the research was directed was:

> There is a direct relationship between the amount of uncertainty perceived by superintendents and the degree to which stress is present.

This sub-hypothesis is an extension of an idea put forth by Edwin M. Bridges who suggested that uncertainty can be reduced by prediction. The administrator must consider the futures which might occur in contrast to his immediate plans. Bridges also considers how the decisional processes of individuals are affected by crisis conditions and what some of the possible consequences are for the organization.[1] For example, the superintendent in crisis description D involving a student disturbance would be uncertain about the action to be taken. A result of this uncertainty is greater stress on the superintendent.

To investigate this sub-hypothesis, a comparison of superintendent responses to questions on stress (mean of the means of question 7 - Based on the circumstances in the above crisis, would you expect a change in the degree of stress in your administrative organization? and question 8 - Do you feel personal stress in the above situation?) and uncertainty (question 6 - How certain would you be in your response to the school committee about reducing the budget to parallel population changes?).

The relationship between the amount of uncertainty perceived by superintendents and the degree to which stress is present was calculated by a Pearson product-moment correlation. Table 10 displays means, standard deviations, and a correlation for sub-hypothesis three. There is a positive

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[1]Bridges, pp. 2-4.

relationship between stress and uncertainty. A correlation of .384 was calculated. A t-test was performed and the correlation was established as statistically significant at the .05 level.

TABLE 10

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION
BETWEEN STRESS AND UNCERTAINTY

VARIABLES	MEAN	S.D.	r	df	t-VALUE
Uncertainty (mean of means) (for questions) (7 and 8)	3.86	.83	+.384	27	+2.13*
Stress (question 6)	1.87	1.20			

* significant at .05 level

Sub-hypothesis Four

The fourth sub-hypothesis to which the research was directed was:

> There is a direct relationship between the amount of time perceived by superintendents and the degree that they communicate.

This sub-hypothesis originated from Hawes and Smith's views of crisis and time limitations. They point out that crisis is a temporary disruption of the normal routine which must

be operationalized to benefit the organization.[1] The mode of operation suggested by the fourth hypothesis is communication. For example, in crisis description D involving a student disturbance, the superintendent has a time limitation in solving the crisis and must communicate to all conflicting groups to increase the efficiency of his role as chief school administrator. However, the time shortage will reduce the amount of communication to the groups and will thereby reduce the superintendent's effectiveness in this crisis.

To investigate this sub-hypothesis, a comparison of superintendents' responses to questions on time (question 10 - How does the time limitation of two weeks imposed by the above situation affect your decision?) and contact with community and administrators (the mean of the means of question 3 - How would your rate of contact with community leaders change as a result of the request made by the school committee and the reaction of opposing groups?; and question 4 - Would your rate of contact with other administrators outside your school system change given the above circumstances?). This hypothesis was not supported by the product-moment correlation at the .05 level.

Table 11 displays means, standard deviations, and a correlation for sub-hypothesis four. There is a positive relationship between time and communication. The correlation .234 is significant at the .10 level. A t-test was performed

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[1]Hawes and Smith, pp. 423-435.

and the correlation was not statistically significant at the .05 level. Therefore, this sub- ypothesis was not supported.

TABLE 11

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION BETWEEN TIME AND COMMUNICATION

VARIABLES	MEAN	S.D.	r	df	t-VALUE
Time (question 10)	2.55	1.08	+.234	27	+1.23*
Communication (mean of means) (for questions) (3 and 4)	3.90	.61			

* not significant at .05 level

Sub-hypothesis Five

The fifth sub-hypothesis to which the research was directed was:

> There is a direct relationship between the amount of stress perceived by superintendents and the degree that they contract authority.

This sub-hypothesis originated from William Gore's description of stress in the organization. He makes reference to heuristic behavior in decision-making which is marked by improvision and spontaneity. During times of heuristic decision behavior there is a question of standard values. This

precipitates stress and causes a contraction of authority on the part of the administrator. He makes more decisions by himself and delegates less authority during crisis.[1] This is partially caused by his own self-confidence and some mistrust of the capabilities of others. Also, Allport has pointed out that decision-making reflects the inner-beliefs of the decision-maker.[2] This suggests that if the superintendent feels stress when making decisions during crisis, he will contract authority. For example, in crisis description B involving a major curriculum change, the superintendent would contract authority if he felt stress because the mayor brought it to the superintendent's attention.

This sub-hypothesis was investigated by making a comparison of superintendent responses to questions on stress (the mean of the means of question 7 - Based on the circumstances in the above crisis, would you expect a change in the degree of stress in your administrative organization?; and question 8 - Do you feel personal stress in the above situation?) and authority (the mean of the means of question 2 - How would your rate of contact with administrators inside your school system change as a result of the request made by the school committee and the reaction of the opposing groups?; and question 9 - To what extent would you contract the authority of remaining administrators if a reduction should take place?).

[1]Gore, pp. 19-40

[2]Allport, p. 169.

Table 12 displays means, standard deviations, and a correlation for sub-hypothesis five. There is a positive relationship between stress and the contraction of authority. A correlation of .541 was calculated. A t-test was perf rmed and the correlation was established as statistically significant at the .01 level.

TABLE 12

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION
BETWEEN STRESS AND AUTHORITY

VARIABLES	MEAN	S.D.	r	df	t-VALUE
Stress (mean of means) (for questions) (7 and 8)	1.87	.83	+.541	27	+3.33*
Contraction of Authority (mean of means) (for questions) (2 and 9)	3.93	.68			

* significant at .01 level

Sub-hypothesis Six

The sixth sub-hypothesis to which research was directed was:

> There is a direct relationship between the amount of uncertainty perceived by superintendents and the degree to which they contract authority.

This sub-hypothesis originated from the work of John Rodriguez. He found that in two of the three superintendents studied, there was a change in authority relationships during the crisis period. Rodriguez suggested that during non-stress periods, superintendents tend to emphasize the differentiation of responsibilities between the school board and the administrators of the school. Also, it was found that all three superintendents in the Rodriguez study tended to involve fewer administrators in their decisions for the management of the crisis.[1] The responses to question 9 on contraction of authority by superintendents supports the results of the Rodriguez study. The relationship of contraction of authority with uncertainty is based upon attitudes of the superintendent. These attitudes may be part of his professional training, and/or experience. When the superintendent is uncertain, he will attempt to make his own duties that would ordinarily have been delegated. For example, in crisis description B involving a major curriculum change, the curriculum director or principal would ordinarily have been responsible for this area. Since a crisis situation occurred and came to the attention of the superintendent, he felt uncertain about its resolution and contracted authority.

To investigate this sub-hypothesis, a comparison of superintendent responses to questions on uncertainty (question 6 - How certain would you be in your response to the

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[1]Rodriguez, p. 72.

school committee about reducing the budget to parallel population changes?) and authority (question 9 - To what extent would you contract the authority of remaining administrators if a reduction should take place?).

Table 13 displays means, standard deviations, and a correlation for sub-hypothesis six. A correlation of .662 was calculated. A t-test was performed and the correlation was established as statistically significant at the .001 level.

TABLE 13

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION
BETWEEN UNCERTAINTY AND AUTHORITY

VARIABLES	MEAN	S.D.	r	df	t-VALUE
Uncertainty (question 6)	3.86	1.20	+.662	27	+4.16*
Contraction of Authority (question 9)	3.44	1.20			

* significant at .001 level

Sub-hypothesis Seven

The final sub-hypothesis to which the research was directed was:

There is a direct relationship between the amount of seriousness perceived by superintendents and the degree of stress that they experience.

This sub-hypothesis originated from Bertrum S. Brown's comments on stress. He pointed out that stress is not uncomfortable and usually does little damage in small doses.[1] Stress only becomes harmful when it goes beyond the administrator's tolerance level. This tolerance level is related to how serious the crisis is perceived by the administrator. If the administrator feels that the crisis is very serious, he will perceive a high degree of stress and reach his level of tolerating the stress. For example, in crisis description D, if the superintendent perceives the crisis involving a student disruption as very serious, he will receive a high degree of stress and might reach his level of tolerance. When this happens, Rodriguez found some superintendents choose the course of resigning or moving to other positions.

An investigation of this sub-hypothesis was made through a comparison of superintendent responses to questions on seriousness (question 1 - Given the circumstances of the above crisis, how would you classify its seriousness?) and stress (the sum of means of question 7 - Based on the circumstances in the above crisis, would you expect a change in the degree of stress in your administrative organization?;

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[1]Brown, pp. 48-50.

and question 8 - Do you feel personal stress in the above situation?).

Table 14 displays means, standard deviations, and a correlation for sub-hypothesis seven. A correlation of .71 was calculated. A t-test was performed and the correlation was established as statistically significant at the .001 level.

TABLE 14

PEARSON PRODUCT-MOMENT CORRELATION
BETWEEN SERIOUSNESS AND STRESS

VARIABLES	MEAN	S.D.	r	df	t-VALUE
Seriousness (question 1)	1.68	.94	.710	27	3.69*
Stress (mean of means) (for questions) (7 and 8)	1.87	.83			

* significant at .001 level

Summary

The major hypothesis to which the research was directed was:

> There are statistically significant relationships between characteristics of crises and administrative response to crises.

This hypothesis was investigated through seven sub-hypotheses based on previous research and literature. Pearson product-moment correlations and t-tests were conducted on each relationship.

TABLE 15

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS, T-SCORES, AND SIGNIFICANCE LEVELS FOR SUB-HYPOTHESES

Sub-hypotheses #	Correlations	T-Scores	Sig. Level
1	-.672	-5.23	.001
2	+.430	+2.45	.05
3	+.384	+2.13	.05
4	+.234	+1.23	not sign.
5	+.541	+3.33	.01
6	+.662	+4.16	.001
7	+.710	+3.69	.001

Of the seven hypotheses, six were supported by the data at the .05 level or better. The foregoing analysis yields the following results:

(1) There are statistically significant relationships between the amount of time perceived available by superintendents to solve crisis and the degree to which they would contract authority.

(2) There are statistically significant relationships between the amount of stress perceived by superintendents and the degree to which they use other resources.

(3) There are statistically significant relationships between the amount of uncertainty perceived by superintendents and the degree to which stress is present.

(4) There was not a statistically significant relationship between the amount of time perceived by superintendents and the degree that they communicate.

(5) There are statistically significant relationships between the amount of stress perceived by superintendents and the degree that they contract authority.

(6) There are statistically significant relationships between the amount of uncertainty perceived by superintendents and the degree to which they contract authority.

(7) There are statistically significant relationships between the amount of seriousness perceived by superintendents and the degree of stress they experienced.

Since six of the seven sub-hypotheses are supported, it is reasonable to accept that the major hypothesis is supported by the investigation.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

As a means of identifying crisis in educational administration and assessing the response of administrators to crisis, a study was designed to measure how superintendents would respond to the characteristics of crisis. The research was directed to the following major hypothesis:

> There are statistically significant relationships between the characteristics of crises and administrative response to these crises.

The following seven sub-hypotheses were established to test the major hypothesis:

(1) There is an inverse relationship between the amount of time perceived available for superintendents to solve the crisis and the degree to which they would contract authority.

(2) There is a direct relationship between the amount of stress perceived by superintendents and the degree to which they use other resources.

(3) There is a direct relationship between the amount of uncertainty perceived by superintendents and the degree to which stress is present.

(4) There is a direct relationship between the amount of time perceived by superintendents and the degree that they communicate with others.

(5) There is a direct relationship between the amount of stress perceived by superintendents and the degree that they contract authority.

(6) There is a direct relationship between the amount of uncertainty perceived by superintendents and the degree to which they contract authority.

(7) There is a direct relationship between the amount of seriousness perceived by superintendents and the degree of stress that they experience.

Data was collected on responses to crises by superintendents using a questionnaire constructed for this study (see Appendix B). The questionnaire had four forms to correspond to four crisis situations. The characteristics were

chosen from the literature, and relationships were drawn in the present study. The sub-hypotheses were considered to be supported if statistical significance was established at the .05 level.

The total population of Rhode Island's superintendents of schools (39) were sent one form of the questionnaire. Twenty-nine questionnaires were usable out of the thirty returned. The responses were calculated to establish correlations between the characteristics of crisis and superintendent response. Sub-hypotheses one, six, and seven were significant at .001 level. Sub-hypotheses two and three were significant at the .05 level. The fourth sub-hypothesis was not significant at the .05 level; therefore, this sub-hypothesis was not supported. The fifth sub-hypothesis was significant at the .01 level.

Discussion

The first sub-hypothesis was when the amount of time perceived available for superintendents to solve crisis decreases, the degree to which they contract authority increases. Previous findings, concerning the relationship of time and authority, corroborated this correlation. The generalization that is suggested for educational administrators is: when authority is contracted because of time limitations, management efforts will be restricted and inhibit a desirable outcome to crisis.

Rodriguez points out that the administrator has the power to solve crisis because of his authority. He describes authority as a legitimate use of power to govern the conduct of members of the organization as far as what they will do or will not do within the structure. The authority structure is the system by which power to make decisions and responsibility for tasks has been formally allocated in the organization. The contraction of authority includes these:(1) shifting of decision-making activities to superordinate levels; (2) reduction in the number of persons or units involved in making decisions without reference to hierarchical arrangements; and (3) an increase in the frequency of authority decisions without increase in authority units. Rodriguez believes that a superordinate authority has taken action which results in the contraction of authority. He assumes that the superintendent is the superordinate administrative authority in the organization. The superintendent's actions are assumed to cause a change in the authority structure.[1] This was supported in the present investigation in relation to authority being contracted when time limitations occur. (There was a significant relationship between time and the contraction of authority at the .001 level.)

The present study viewed time and the contraction of authority through superintendent action, for example, in crisis situation D involving a student disturbance. Superintendents were presented with a crisis on a day with a full

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[1]Rodriguez, pp. 17-19.

agenda. This crisis had no warning. The disturbance had racial overtones and resulted in the injury of students. Teacher and student safety are major concerns and action by the superintendent is demanded. The present study has found this action to be a contraction of authority which results in the superintendent assuming the task. The implications of superintendents assuming the tasks of lower administrators are that they might reveal a lack of confidence in their administrative staff. Also, superintendents are often too far removed to really use their authority effectively in the limited time available in crisis. Hawes and Smith commented that crises interrupts the system temporarily and usually has a cause which is responsible for the beginning and ending of the crisis. The seriousness of crisis is often determined by the length of time that it lasts. The time of most superintendents is very limited. This was evident in that the present study received a slow return of questionnaires as well as the comments that were made in the literature, such as by Moffat: "The hours of the day, the days of the week, and the weeks of the year are never quite long enough for a school administrator."[1] Some superintendents in the past have felt that time spent on crisis is wasted, but this was not found to be the case in the present investigation.

A second sub-hypothesis was if the amount of stress perceived by superintendents is high; the degree to which they use other resources is high. Administrators who are

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[1]Moffat, p. 12.

successful must be able to feel comfortable under situations of stress. However, Brown points out that most administrators are uncomfortable during periods of stress.[1] Evidently, based on the results of the present investigation, the more stress or discomfort a superintendent feels in a crisis situation, the more he will contract authority. This happens because the superintendent assumes authority for the purpose of solving the crisis as quickly as possible to relieve his own personal stress. It is important to consider the superintendents' level of tolerance in stressful situations. This area would be a good point of investigation for future research in crisis management.

The response to questions seven and eight on stress in the present investigation support the fact that the superintendent is the target of most stressful situations. In some of the responses, it was evident that stress was categorized in relation to its intensity. An example was that some respondents did not consider crisis situation B as intense because similar occurrences happen all the time for them. Gore feels that all stress is categorized in relation to its intensity.[2] Since crisis usually occurs without warning, it is usually in opposition to the goals of the superintendent and creates stress. Also, stress is related to the decision-making process by: (1) presenting radical solutions

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[1]Brown, pp. 1-3.

[2]Gore, pp. 38-39.

to the crisis, (2) redefining a basic goal, (3) vengence toward individuals or groups responsible, and (4) blaming someone else for the crisis.[1]

A third sub-hypothesis held that when the amount of uncertainty perceived by superintendents in relation to the outcome of the crisis is high, the amount of stress they perceive during a crisis will be high. The superintendent can reduce uncertainty by predicting the outcome of crisis. Examples of this can be seen in all four crisis situations employed in this study. If the superintendents in all four crisis situations predict the outcome, they will feel little uncertainty as well as little stress. It was noted by Rodriguez and supported by this research that uncertainty is a common element in crisis situations.[2] This was very evident in the present study based upon superintendent responses to question six (How certain would you be in your response to the school committee about reducing the budget to parallel population changes?). They were uncertain about how their actions in crisis would be viewed by the school board, parents, and teachers.

Fourth, if the amount of time perceived by superintendents to resolve crisis is low, the degree that they will communicate with others is low. This correlation was attempted based on the literature and research indicating that when time

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Rodriguez, p. 21.

is minimized, communication will be reduced. Rodriguez considered actions of superintendents affecting communication channels. He classified superintendent actions that affect communication channels into those actions that are direct and indirect. The present study did see some evidence of this classification when considering the responses made by each superintendent to the questionnaire. Rodriguez focuses upon direct actions of superintendents that affect communication channels.[1] A further classification can be made by referring to March and Simon who broadly classify communication in relation to procedural matters relating to substantive content. Communications that are related to problem solving, problem identification, and evaluative measures are included in the category relating to substantive content.[2] Simon defines communication as "any process whereby decisional premises are transmitted from one member of the organization to another."[3] This definition was accepted and applied to the present study in the fourth sub-hypothesis. Herman offers the proposition that with the introduction of crisis, the total number of communication channels used for the collection and distribution of information will be reduced.[4] This proposition was not supported in the present research by the statistical relationship computed.

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[1]Ibid., p. 20.

[2]March and Simon, p. 161.

[3]Rodriguez, p. 20.

[4]Herman, pp. 67-69.

Rodriguez suggests that superintendents generally have great control over communication channels. Almost all organization-wide authoritative communications originate from the superintendent's office or from authority units that are subordinate to the superintendent. Therefore, the use and number of communication channels are at the superintendents control. There are operational measures of superintendent actions related to: (1) formal directives, (2) face-to-face exchanges with authority units, and (3) telephone conversations with particular individuals in the organization. Some channels that might be classified as ad hoc are special newsletters to members of the organization or special news releases to the media to communicate with both members of the organization and the community.[1]

The fifth sub-hypothesis stated that if the amount of stress perceived by superintendents is low, the degree to which they use other resources will be low. There was a positive relationship between stress and the use of other resources.

Rodriguez has suggested that the use of resources is closely related to the power of the superintendent. First, there are those resources which are connected to the position and persist only in the context of the organization. He differentiates authority from power as "the legitimate right to use power." Examples of power resources are the allocation of organizational resources, capacity to establish regulations and issue directives, control of information through formal

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[1]Rodriguez, p. 23.

communication channels, major influence in policy formulation and policy decision, direct access to all work groups in the organization, access to information, and traditional social status of the position. The superintendent must be wary of those resources which are available belonging to the status of his position because during crisis there will be a tendency on the part of opponents to disregard status.[1]

The most influential resource ascribed to the position of superintendents is to define alternatives to a given situation. The superintendent must consider his actions in the light of the resulting repercussions. Means of defining alternatives are through policies of the administration, administrative directives, newsletters, press releases and discussions with heads of authority units. The superintendent who can use these means of defining alternatives will not feel the stress as strongly when crisis occurs. Second, the superintendent has personal resources which are transferable as the individual changes his position from one administrative post to another. The superintendent must bring with him a variety of experiences that he has obtained previously. These experiences will be very helpful in crises and perhaps relieve stress from certain parts of the crisis. Third, the superintendent has a sense of timing in the use of resources and the capacity for decision. If the superintendent's actions are at the correct time, there will be

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[1]Ibid.

less stress and greater communication. This was evident in response made to all four of the crisis situations in the present study. Other resources that might be identified include: knowledge and use of problem solving models, skill in gathering and using information, skill in bargaining, influential friends in business and professional community, expertise relating to educational and organizational matters, and access to resource people outside the organization. Not all personal resources are listed nor is it implied that any individual superintendent would possess all those listed. In relation to the present study, superintendents in Rhode Island possess resources in varying degrees, but all attempted to use resources on a selective basis to increase their power during crisis. For example, in crisis situation A on the decline in student population, superintendents varied on the resources to be used and to the degrees that they should use resources in solving this crisis. However, they did feel that resources should be used in the solving of crisis. There seems to be some general feeling also that outside resources should be chosen carefully and that the superintendent should be wary of groups with special interests outside the purposes of educational management. When such groups offer their assistance, the superintendent can be suspect that they are at the root of the very crisis that they want to assist in solving.

The sixth hypothesis stated that if the amount of uncertainty perceived by superintendents is high, the degree to

which they contract authority will be high. A positive relationship between stress and authority was found to be statistically significant.

Rodriguez found evidence that during crisis there was a tendency for the superintendent to contract authority. Also, he found that there appears to be an expectation held among subordinates for the superintendent to contract authority during crisis and make decisions on critical crisis-related problems. There was evidence in all three cases studied by Rodriguez that to some extent this does occur. Rodriguez suggests that subordinates reject difficult decisions because they believe critical decisions require that the superintendent make the decision consistent with the strategy being employed.[1]

In relation to the contraction of authority, Rodriguez suggests that managers ask if contracting authority during crisis is really beneficial. He believes that it will restrict management efforts rather than facilitate them.[2] Therefore, in combination with the results of the present study, it seems that superintendents who feel stress will contract authority and thereby inhibit the management process during crisis.

Although it seems logical that authority should not be contracted during crisis, the present study indicates that superintendents who are uncertain will contract authority.

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[1] Ibid., p. 90.

[2] Ibid.

The trait of uncertainty seems to be more evident in the educational administrator than in other types of administrators. Perhaps this was more evident in the present study because of the uncertainty of the position of the superintendent himself. He is usually on a short-term contract, does not have tenure, and is responsible to a school committee or school board. His position at times is political and is often determined by the winning of community support. Therefore, the authority response to crisis may be linked to the cause for the superintendent's uncertainty and to an increase in personal stress.

The seventh sub-hypothesis stated that when the amount of seriousness perceived by superintendents is low, the degree to which they feel personal stress will be low. A positive relationship between seriousness and stress was found to be statistically significant in the present study. It was found that the more serious a superintendent considered a crisis, the more he felt stress. Superintendents consider certain values of high priority. It is these values that create stress and are considered serious by superintendents. Also, the more serious crisis situations take greater amounts of time to solve and are often more complex. Superintendents experiencing very serious crisis will feel less stress if they have positive life attitudes and a sense of humor.

In summary, seriousness does create stress for the superintendent. If he interprets the crisis as serious, he

will focus more attention to it. This attention will involve the use of all his personal and professional resources. When the aspects of the crisis situation are under the superintendent's control, some of the stress will be reduced. It is possible that as soon as the superintendent feels less stress, there will be less attention given to other aspects of the crisis which seem less important. Some superintendents apparently experience more stress because they classify more crises as serious or because the setting in which they find themselves is more volatile.

Implications for Further Research

As was pointed out, this study was the first to test the theoretical models of crisis characteristics in education and superintendent response. These theoretical models were based upon assumptions found in the literature and research that existed. The correlations that were made attempted to show statistical relationships and give an experimental foundation to the literature and research. Nevertheless, the investigator felt that previous studies have left much space for further research. The implications for further research which are presented in this section stem largely from this general observation.

The implications for future research can be seen in the limitations of the present study. There were components in the topic of crisis management with which the present study could and did not deal. Examples of this are other influences

on crisis management, superintendent training, and administrators from various authority units. There were also limitations in the use of artificial crisis situations and in the results of the study to the degree that findings apply to similar populations. These limitations provide future studies an opportunity to build upon the present research.

This study focused on a descriptive approach to the problem rather than on a manipulation of variables. Since the relationships between these variables and superintendents' reactions are substantial, future studies should seek to manipulate some or all of the variables in an experimental mode, thus increasing the explanatory power of the research.

Subsequent research should focus upon methods for solving crisis. This should be a series of studies on each type of crisis in education. These studies might involve various administrative personnel in crisis situations in the educational setting. This is particularly important because crises might be viewed differently at each administrative level. However, it is expected that these crises will have some of the common characteristics identified in the present study with superintendents in crisis management. It is expected the responses to crisis by administrators at other levels will also present similar responses to those of superintendents. Thus, it is possible to hypothesize that as superintendents show significant relationships between their responses to the characteristics of crisis, so also should principals and other administrators.

Rodriguez had done the preliminary work on the investigation of crisis management in education. Focus was placed on superintendent actions and their consequences in the reduction of crisis. A deliberate attempt was made in the present research to compare chief executive officer of the school organization to chief executive officer of industrial or military complexes. Many of the hypotheses formulated did not hold in the public arena and were modified. Some differences appear to stem from the authority and power base of the chief executive officer of the school district. If the results of Rodriguez are considered in the light of the present relationships involving the superintendent and response to crisis, other hypotheses might be developed which will hold in the public school arena.[1]

Further investigations should not hesitate to look at the decision-making process more closely in crisis management. Superintendent actions to regulate the decision-making mechanism are pertinent to the management of crisis. Therefore, research on the relationships between restrictions on the decision-making process, such as controlling the flow of information, and crisis management need to be undertaken. For the superintendent to successfully regulate the decision-making process in crisis situations, it requires actions which account for a number of complex variables. These actions must be well planned. It would be important for further

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[1]Ibid., p. 1.

research to be done on other possible variables related to crisis. Also, the planning of action to be taken would be the ultimate goal of future research on crisis management. This could result in the development of a handbook for superintendents and other educational administrators.

There are other implications for further research which could be valuable in terms of establishing clearer perspectives of crisis. Crisis needs to be redefined on the basis of the research and literature which is always becoming available. Comparisons need to be made of crisis in other areas as opposed to the sample used in the present study. Also, there might be a series of studies on selection procedures for potential or aspiring school superintendents.

Implications for Education

It was noted earlier that research in educational administration has been expanding to include some of the theories included in other forms of administration (like in industry or business). This expansion will undoubtedly have long-range positive effects on crisis management in education and in the identification of responses made to crisis by educational managers. It is clear, however, that while there exists a substantial amount of research in related disciplines which is applicable to education, the translation process, at this point, is inadequate to affect optimal utilization in education.

This particular situation is true of research on crisis management. Despite the fact that more research is needed on the variables of crisis themselves, there has been little lateral development by educators in using what is available in other fields on crisis or in studying new concepts themselves.

It is unfortunate that, in an effort to focus clearly on implications for educational practice, a total concept for management of crisis has not been developed. References to other disciplines such as business management have been motivated by attempts to improve knowledge about the science of administration. General or specific methodologies that looked promising were borrowed piecemeal as they applied to specific problems. This short-range necessity has precluded, until recently, an emphasis on model building which would serve as a skeletal framework on which additional "borrowings" from other disciplines might be attached. Clearly, if educational practice is to attain long-range, positive improvement, a model of crisis management is needed. In the case of this research, there are specific findings which are important to crisis management by superintendents. The basic problem is to relate them to crisis management of other educational administrators.

An important implication of this research is that administrators must receive special training to meet the demand of their positions. This new training must be scientifically based, practical, and closely simulated with on

the job circumstances. There is a definite need for new types of training programs which would allow the educational administrator to experience the characteristics of crisis which were described here as separate entities. Training for educational administration should prepare the educator to meet the demanding circumstances of crisis. As a result of the training, the superintendent could turn the seemingly troublesome event into a beneficial situation.

Another implication of this research is that characteristics of crisis and administrator responses can now be used in actual crisis situations as they occur. Administrators can refer to the present findings and respond to crisis in somewhat of a less haphazard fashion. They might also develop the initial steps of this study into other areas involving crisis that were beyond the scope of this research. Then, comparisons could be made between the types of responses superintendents made without knowing the findings of the present study as compared to those types of responses based upon these findings.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONS TO ASK PILOT TEST GROUP

1. Does the cover letter make you interested enough to complete the questionnaire?
2. Can you suggest any ways to change the cover letter?
3. Should the cover letter say something about the author?
4. What suggestions could make to improve the directions on the questionnaire?
5. Do the directions on the questionnaire seem unclear?
6. Would you suggest a different order for the questionnaire? Which questions should come first?
7. Are there any questions that you feel should not be asked or questions which should be deleted?
8. What about the number of questions? Should there be more or less questions?
9. Would you reword any questions? Which ones? How could you do this?
10. Are there questions which you think should have been included?
11. Are the choices in each question adequate? What changes would you suggest?
12. Are any questions ambiguous?
13. Would you suggest that the personal questions be placed at the beginning of the questionnaire rather than at the end?
14. How long did it take you to answer the questionnaire?
15. Should the results of the study be promised to the participants?
16. Should there be more choices offered in the questions? If yes, in which questions?
17. Should the questions have a place for participant comment?
18. Do you consider this situation a crisis? Why or why not?

APPENDIX B

60 Argyle Street
Cranston, Rhode Island
January 27, 1975

Crisis management in education is becoming one of the principle concerns of school administrators like yourself. I am presently conducting a study of crisis management in order to begin accumulating knowledge in this critical area. At the completion of this study, an abstract of the results and conclusions will be provided to all respondents.

I would like you to give me your candid and honest opinion based on the crisis description that is enclosed. First, read the crisis description to get the full impact of what has taken place. Second (this is important), please place yourself in the crisis situation and assume that this situation is really happening in your school system. Finally, answer the questions enclosed based upon how you would respond to the crisis.

As an enclosure with this letter and questionnaire, you will find a return self-addressed and stamped envelope for your convenience. If at all possible, please return this questionnaire by February 10, 1975. Thank you for your cooperation.

Very truly yours,

Richard L. George

Enclosures

APPENDIX B

DIRECTIONS: As you read, please place yourself in the following crisis as if it were really happening to you.

Crisis Description

An opening for the position of secondary school administrator has occurred in your school system. There were twenty applicants that were screened by a committee made up of an assistant superintendent, a secondary principal, two teachers, two students, and one parent. Three candidates were selected as finalists by the screening committee. Candidate No. 1 was a doctoral candidate with no administrative experience. Candidate No. 2 was an experienced female teacher and department head from within your system. She had much graduate course work and experience at the secondary level. Candidate No. 3 was black, had little graduate training, and taught in your system.

You are given the names and resumes of all three candidates. Since the position is a strategic one for your school system, you call several references. With the information you have, you realize that all three applicants can do the job. However, there is a need for more minority administrators in your school system; therefore, you give candidate no. 3 the position.

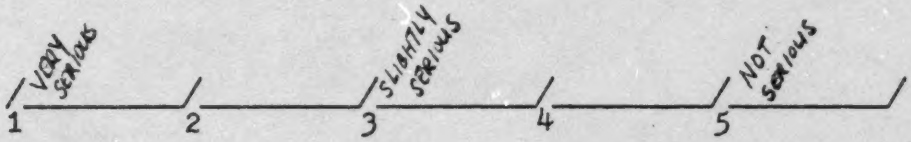
When candidate no. 2 (the experienced, female teacher) receives your letter thanking her for applying, she calls the teachers' union and the Civil Liberties Union claiming sex

and racial discrimination in your decision. A formal grievance is filed, and you are now asked to withdraw candidate no. 3 by both the teachers' union and the Civil Liberties Union. You are now faced with a teachers' strike and a law suit. On the other hand, candidate no. 3 has notifi d the Afro-Educators Association in your system, and they have organized a community action group to picket your office. Black and white parents are now calling your office refusing to send their children to school if the opposite racial candidate is appointed to the position of secondary school administrator. The media is now in your office requesting a press conference, and the school committee has given you a deadline to have the position filled today.

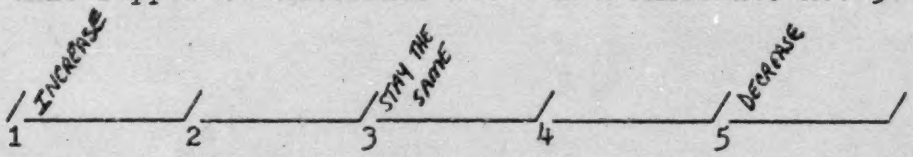
FORM C

DIRECTIONS: Please respond by circling the number which best corresponds to your answer in the questions which follow.

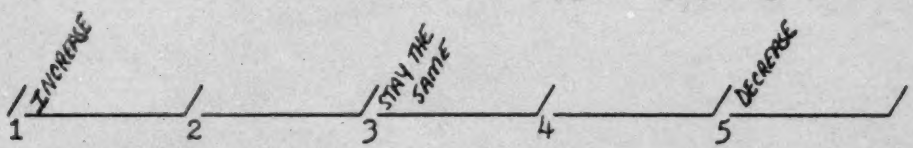
1. Given the circumstances of the above crisis, how would you classify its seriousness?



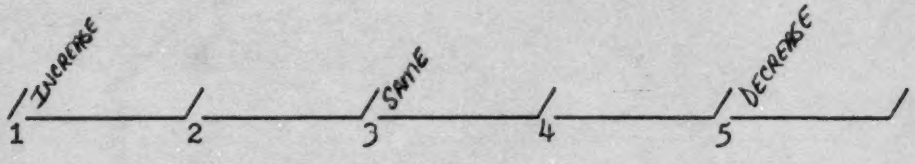
2. How would your rate of contact within your school system change as a result of the reaction of groups that supported candidate no. 2 and candidate no. 3?



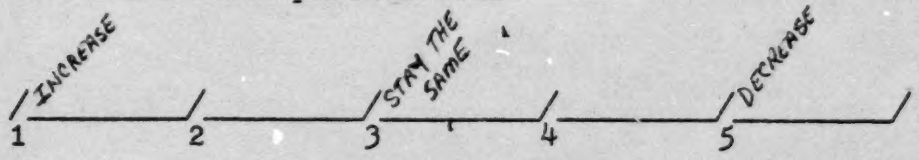
3. How would your rate of contact with community leaders change as a result of the deadline given by school committee and the reaction of opposing groups?



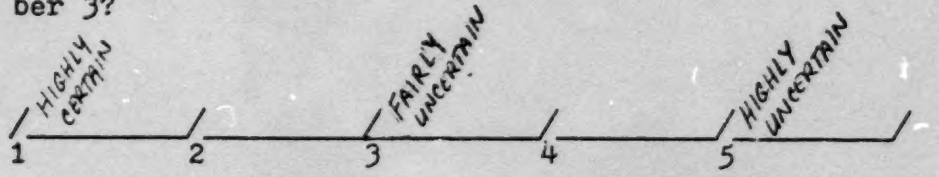
4. Would your rate of contact with other administrators outside your school system change given the above circumstances?



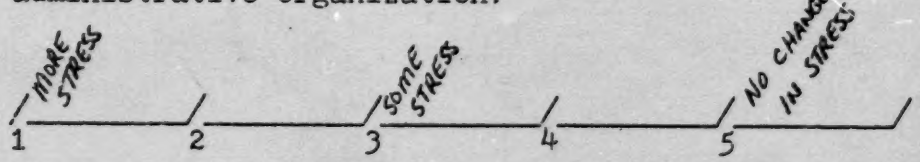
5. In the above situation, your rate of communication with black and white parents would:



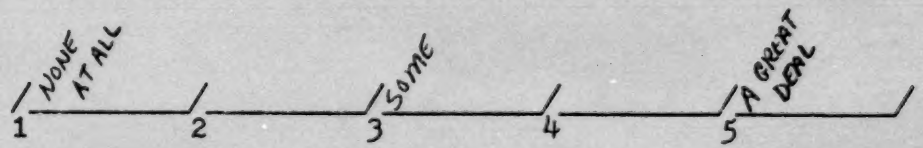
6. How certain would you be in your hiring candidate number 3?



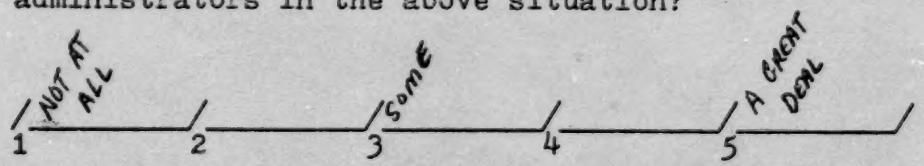
7. Based on the circumstances in the above crisis, would you expect a change in the degree of stress in your administrative organization?



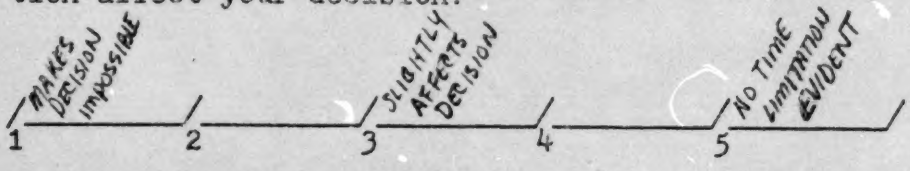
8. Do you feel personal stress in the above situation?



9. To what extent would you contract authority of lower administrators in the above situation?



10. How does the time limitation imposed by the above situation affect your decision?



DIRECTIONS: As you read, please picture yourself in the following crisis as if it were really happening to you.

Crisis Description

A major curriculum change has been made at Royal High School which is located in a middle income district of your city. It all began when four students suggested to their classroom teacher that his United States History class was quite boring. The teacher found that other teachers were getting similar comments about the history course. The reasons for the criticism were: (1) the course placed too much emphasis upon facts and dates, (2) the teachers did not provide time for student participation in class, (3) the course did not focus on social problems, (4) little community activity was included in the course, and (5) the textbooks used were out-dated and represented one point of view.

The teacher asked the students to meet with him to discuss the course in more detail. He found the meeting enlightening and considered their comments as very positive. The group met several more times to plan a new course, which formed the basis of a new approach to United States History. This new approach was more socially based around controversial issues. These issues involved such topics as crime, marriage, population, and race. The speakers that were scheduled for the first several weeks included a drug addict, a Black Panther, and a homosexual couple. Also, the teacher had a set of objectives to measure student performance. Although students

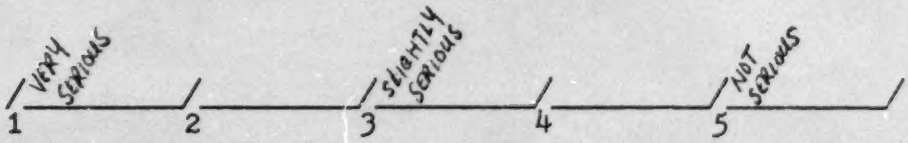
had managed to enlist some private funding for some new materials, there were still those old textbooks.

The course became so popular that the teacher was approached by his department head and asked to present it to the principal. The principal supported the new course. At this point, you were told about the course at your weekly cabinet meeting. It seemed sound, and you were very much encouraged by the initiative of the students and the teacher involved. However, there was a gathering of forces by several community groups against the new approach because of its concept of using the community as a classroom. These citizens felt that they pay taxes for students to learn in school buildings and that the speakers scheduled were not appropriate. Therefore, they organized a picket line for the school committee meeting which you attended last night. The citizens have now called parents and distributed a petition to remove you from office. This was brought to your attention by the mayor.

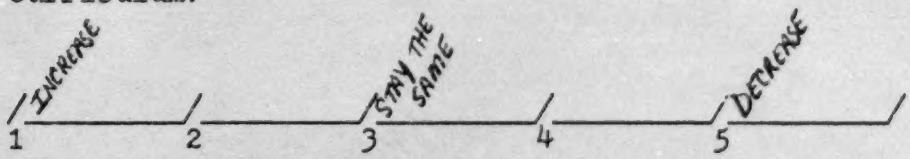
FORM B

DIRECTIONS: Please respond by circling the number which best corresponds to your answer in the questions which follow.

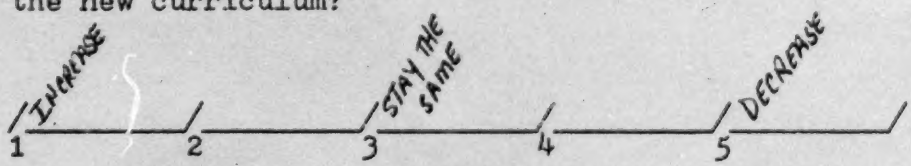
1. Given the circumstances of the above crisis, how would you classify its seriousness?



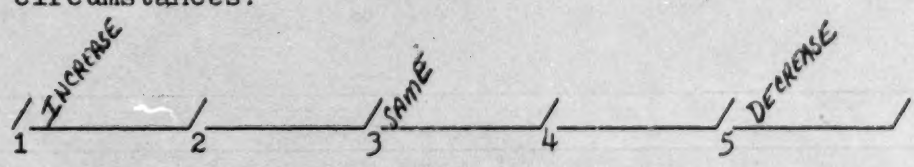
2. How would your rate of contact with the principal and department heads within your school system change as a result of the crisis that you face over the new curriculum?



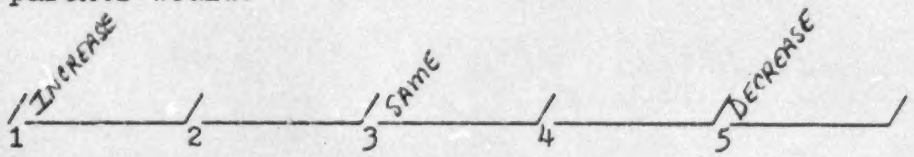
3. How would your rate of contact with community leaders change in as a result of the crisis that you face over the new curriculum?



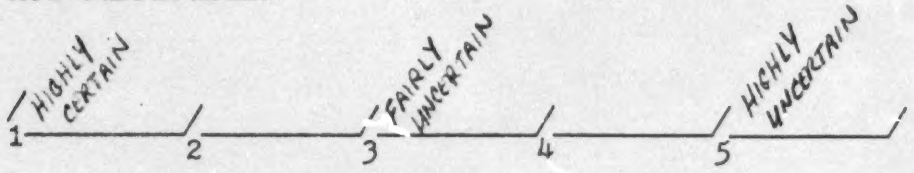
4. Would your rate of contact with other administrators outside your school system change given the above circumstances?



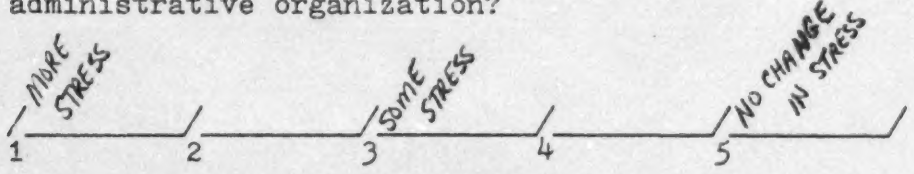
5. In the above situation, your rate of communication with parents would:



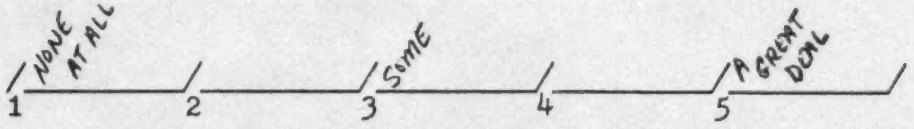
6. After hearing from the mayor, how certain would you be in regards to your original positive feelings about the new curriculum?



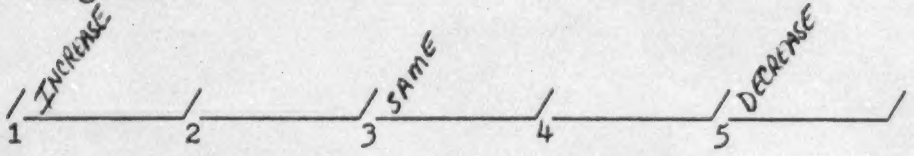
7. Based on the circumstances in the above crisis, would you expect a change in the degree of stress in your administrative organization?



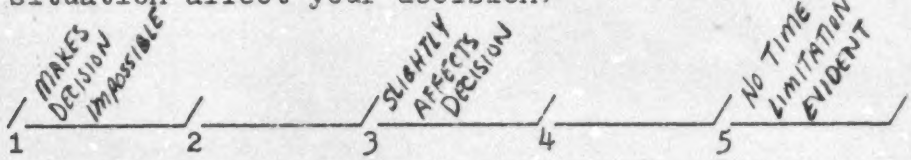
8. Do you feel personal stress in the above situation?



9. As a result of this crisis involving the new course, would you contract the authority of lower administrators in establishing other courses or curriculum changes?



10. How does the time limitation imposed by the above situation affect your decision?



DIRECTIONS: As you read, please picture yourself in the following crisis as if it were really happening to you.

Crisis Description

Student population has been on a decline as a result of a reduction in the birth rate and out-migration of families from your school district. This was quite evident from the census which was taken this year. In the census, births were down by ten percent in the area served by your school system, and migration out of your area was up eight percent. The schools in your system are predominantly old and need much repair. They have felt the burden of over-population and minimal funding in past years.

The mayor, who appoints a six member school committee, is approaching an election year and is looking for ways to avoid a tax increase. To achieve this, the mayor believes that a cut in the educational budget may be a good place to reduce spending. Therefore, the mayor has instructed the school committee to investigate reducing the school budget by at least fifteen percent on the basis of the reduction in student population. The school committee informs you of the mayor's instructions. The committee suggests that it might be possible for you to cut teachers and some administrators because they feel that this would correspond with the smaller population that the schools now had to serve. The chairman of the school committee appoints a sub-committee to review the census figures. Also, he requests the facts and figures

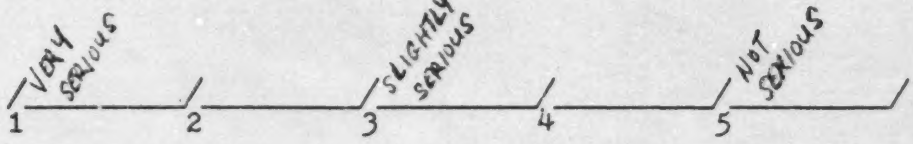
from your present budget and projections for the next five years. In addition, the school committee would like to know more about reducing school budgets to parallel population changes; therefore, they have asked you to write a position paper on the subject. The school committee will have the budget on the agenda for their next meeting in two weeks.

During the two week period, a community group and professional organizations representing teachers arise in opposition to a plan to reduce the school budget. They feel that the budget should remain the same with no reduction in staff to provide greater individualization of instruction and to improve the physical conditions of the schools.

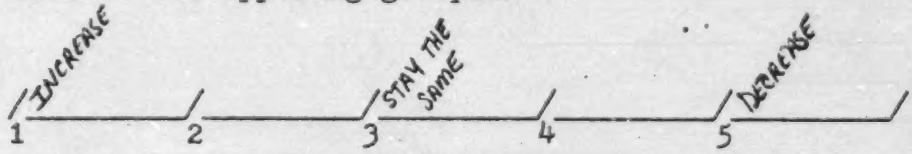
FORM A

DIRECTIONS: Please respond by circling the number which best corresponds to your answer in the questions which follow.

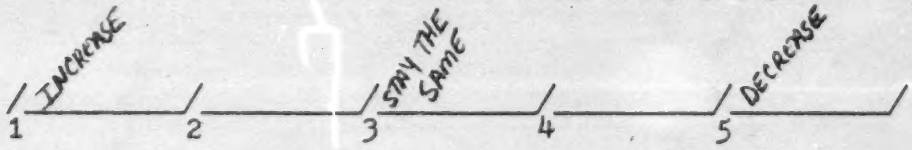
1. Given the circumstances of the above crisis, how would you classify its seriousness?



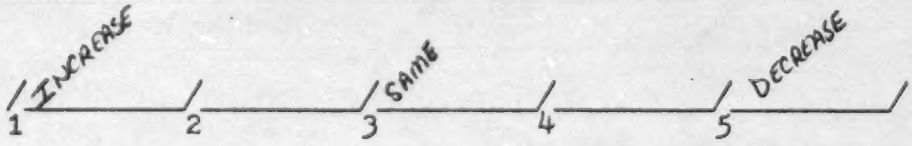
2. How would your rate of contact with administrators within your school system change as a result of the request made by the school committee and the reaction of the opposing groups?



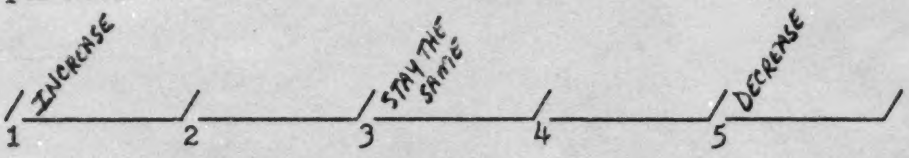
3. How would your rate of contact with community leaders change as a result of the request made by the school committee and the reaction of opposing groups?



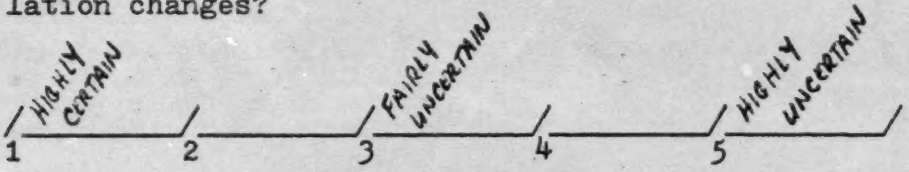
4. Would your rate of contact with other administrators outside your school system change given the above circumstances?



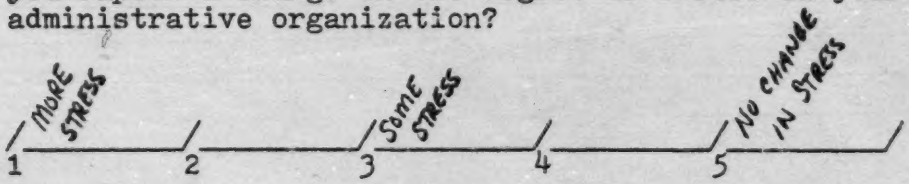
5. In the above situation, your rate of communication with parents would:



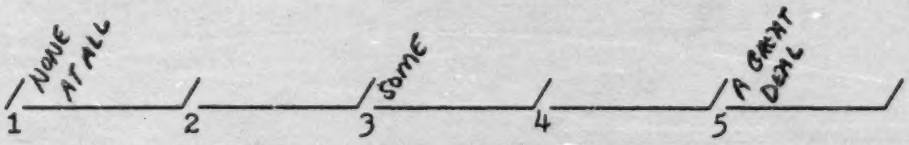
6. How certain would you be in your response to the school committee about reducing the budget to parallel population changes?



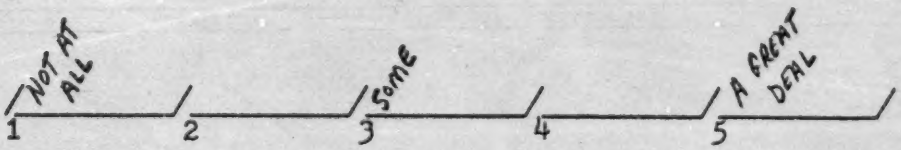
7. Based on the circumstances in the above crisis, would you expect a change in the degree of stress in your administrative organization?



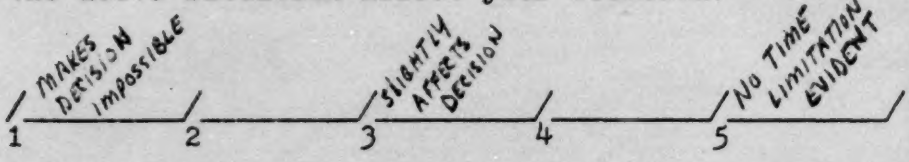
8. Do you feel personal stress in the above situation?



9. To what extent would you contract authority of lower administrators change if a reduction should take place?



10. How does the time limitation of two weeks imposed by the above situation affect your decision?



DIRECTIONS: As you read, please picture yourself in the following crisis as if it were really happening to you.

Crisis Description

Your agenda for the day is quite full. There are several applicants for an administrative post scheduled for interviews with you in the morning. At 1 p.m., a weekly meeting with administrators in your cabinet will be held; and at 2:30 p.m., you are scheduled to speak at the local teachers' college. Also, there is a school committee meeting at 7 p.m. for which you must prepare. In addition to these scheduled appointments, there are those daily papers to sign and the other responsibilities of the superintendent to fill in any spare time.

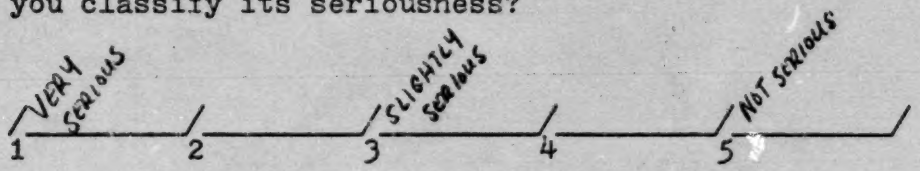
At 11:30 a.m., in addition to this full agenda, a student disturbance breaks out without warning. The disturbance began when two female students of different races had an argument about a boy friend. Although no physical violence occurred, the exchange of threats were of such high intensity that other students began to pass rumors about what might happen. Rumors spread to the entire school and polarization between groups of black and white students began to take place. During the lunch periods, the disturbance started in the school cafeteria when one group of students made verbal threats on another student. Chairs were thrown and fighting started. Several of these high school students were hurt, and many were terribly frightened.

The police were called, and they arrested two students for carrying weapons, two others for insighting a riot, and give students for assaulting other students. The principal notified you about the disturbance by phone about ten minutes after the police arrived. Then, the phone calls from the school committee and parents began to p ur into your office. The teachers' union sent members of its executive board to your office concerned with teacher and student safety. Other principals report some minor disturbances that usually do not occur in their schools and seem to be related to the student revolt. Time is at a minimum, and the occurrences thus far demand action.

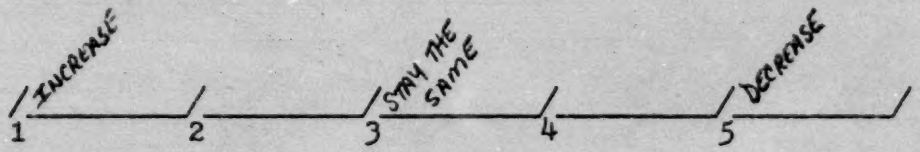
FORM D

DIRECTIONS: Please respond by circling the number which best corresponds to your answer in the questions which follow.

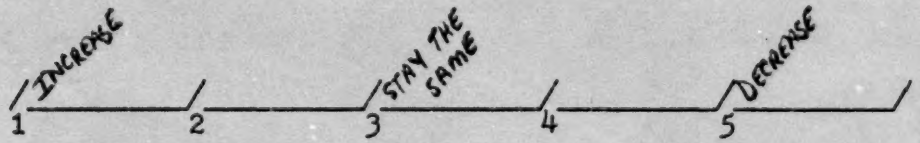
1. Given the circumstances of the above crisis, how would you classify its seriousness?



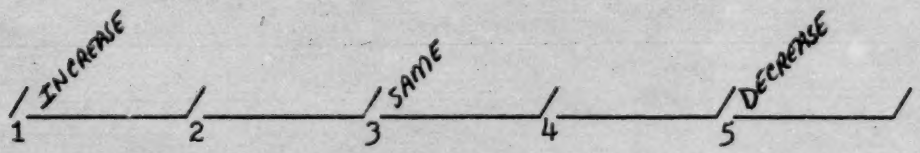
2. How would your rate of contact with administrators within your school system change as a result of the above circumstances?



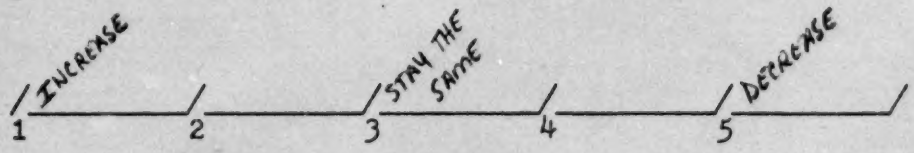
3. How would your rate of contact with community leaders change as a result of the above circumstances?



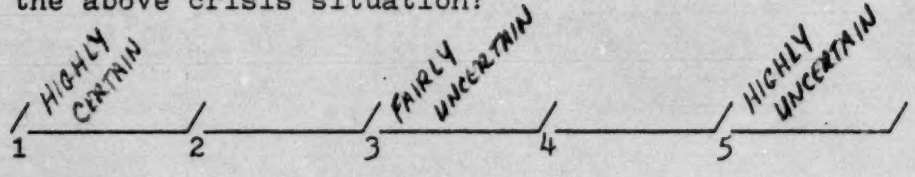
4. Would your rate of contact with other administrators outside your school system change given the above circumstances?



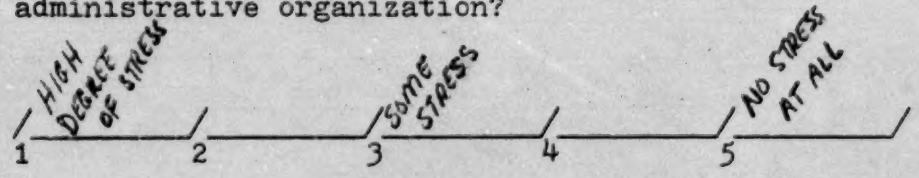
5. In the above situation, your rate of communication with parents would:



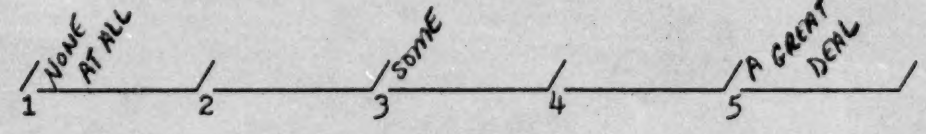
6. How certain would you be in making a decision about the above crisis situation?



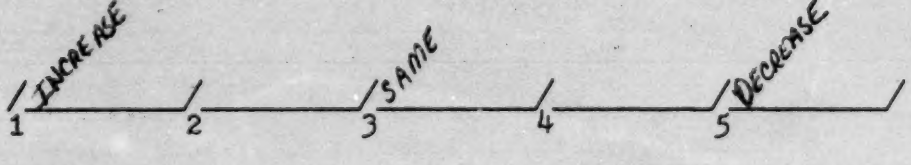
7. Based on the circumstances in the above crisis, would you expect a change in the degree of stress in your administrative organization?



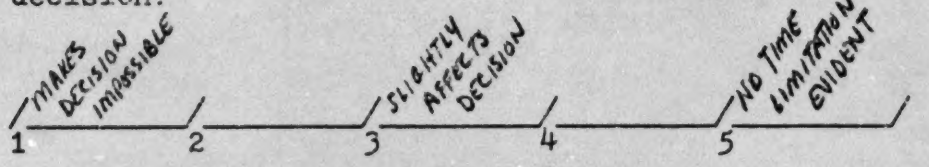
8. Do you feel personal stress in the above situation?



9. To what extent would you contract authority of lower administrators change when you experience this student disturbance?



10. How would a time limitation of one day imposed by the school committee in the above situation affect your decision?



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ABSTRACT

As a means of identifying crisis in educational administration and assessing the response of administrators to crisis, a study was designed to measure the degree that superintendents would respond to the characteristics of crisis.

The sample for the study was all superintendents in Rhode Island public schools. The research design involved: (1) the development of a questionnaire, (2) pilot-testing questionnaire, (3) administering questionnaire, and (4) correlational analysis on the data.

The research was directed to the hypothesis that there are significant relationships between characteristics of crisis and administrator response. This hypothesis is investigated through the following seven sub-hypotheses:

(1) There is an inverse relationship between the amount of time perceived by superintendents to solve the crisis and the degree to which they would contract authority.

(2) There is a direct relationship between the amount of stress perceived by superintendents and the degree to which they use other resources.

(3) There is a direct relationship between the amount of uncertainty perceived by superintendents and the degree to which stress is present.

(4) There is a direct relationship between the amount of time perceived by superintendents and the degree that they communicate.

(5) There is a direct relationship between the amount of stress perceived by superintendents and the degree that they contract authority.

(6) There is a direct relationship between the amount of uncertainty perceived by superintendents and the degree to which they c ntract authority.

(7) There is a direct relationship between the amount of seriousness perceived by superintendents and the degree of stress that they experience.

Pearson product-moment correlations were calculated for each set of responses. Since six of the seven sub-hypotheses were supported by the data at the .05 level or better, the major hypothesis was accepted as being supported by the investigation.